



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: BIRRIWA SOLAR FARM (SSD-29508870)

MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

PANEL: JANETT MILLIGAN
(PANEL CHAIR)
DUNCAN MARSHALL AM
SUELLEN FITZGERALD

OFFICE OF THE IPC: KENDALL CLYDSDALE
GEOFF KWOK

MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL: BRAD CAM
ALINA AZAR
LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

DATE: 2:45PM – 3:45PM
FRIDAY, 31ST MAY 2024

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS MILLIGAN: Well, good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal Land, and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the country from which we virtually meet today, and pay my respects to Elders, past and present. Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Birriwa Solar Farm case, currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant ACEN Australia Proprietary Limited proposes to develop a 600-megawatt solar farm with a two-hour battery storage facility and an on-site accommodation facility and associated infrastructure. And this is approximately 15km southeast of Dunedoo in the Mid-Western Regional and Warrumbungle Shire local government areas. The site is located within the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. My name is Janett Milligan, and I'm the chair of this commission panel. I'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Duncan Marshall, who's sitting here with me and Suellen Fitzgerald, who is online with us. We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale online, and Geoff Kwok from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests of openness and transparency, and to ensure 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. The meeting's 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's important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're 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 up on our website. I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all members to ensure that they don't speak over the top of each other to ensure that we get an accurate transcript. So, let's begin. And can I just point - again, welcome Council and throw over to you to lead us through the discussion to start.

MR CAM: And thank you, it's Brad Cam, General Manager at Mid-Western Regional Council. And Alina, you might want to put the map up as a bit of a starting point for us.

MS AZAR: Sure. That should be showing now.

MS MILLIGAN: It is.

MS AZAR: Great.

MR CAM: Yes. So, Commissioners just wanted to really, first of all, put it into perspective exactly what we're dealing with, particularly in Mid-Western Regional Council with 38 state significant projects, but give you an overview of the impacts on the Warrumbungle, Mid-Western and Dubbo Regional Council. It's - I think collectively we have 53 projects in the REZ that we're dealing with.

So, this Birriwa project is just one of many that are in various stages, some under construction and some through the different areas of the planning. So, a couple of things that we really wanted to talk about and are still got concerns - you mentioned that they were going to build a camp. And that's fine for us as council, but what is uncertain is still the location of the camp and the numbers, the construction numbers. This original application set out 800 construction workers. And we're now seeing it's now only 500 where we've had a project already under construction that is just short of about 380 megawatts, and they have 450 construction workers on site. So, we're really questioning whether the construction numbers are a true reflection. And what we've found in the past with other proponents, it's not it continues after approval, the numbers continue to increase significantly.

So, we're questioning that. But if I look at some of the key issues we talk about traffic and transport, they're suggesting there's going to be 27 vehicle movements per hour through the construction phase. So, one of the things that we really would like the Commissioners to consider as an additional point is that needs to be contribution to local road maintenance. And equally, there's no mention of the Golden Highway and RTA Orana has just completed for the state government, the impacts and the work that needs to be done on the Golden Highway to actually service this renewable energy zone across all components to this project are actually going to come from Port of Newcastle. Whether it's this project or all the other projects that you can see on that map. We're very concerned that the proponent has not even considered the addressing that. I'll let - I'll stop, and I'll let Alina introduce herself and speak and raise some other points. Thank you, Commissioners.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks, Brad.

MS AZAR: Thanks, Brad. So, Alina Azar, Director of Development at Mid-Western Regional Council. Probably just further to the conversation, and I've left the map up here. In terms of social impacts of the project, some of our largest concerns. It will be it 500 workers or 800 workers, we are currently suffering quite significant shortages in doctors. So, we acknowledge and appreciate the proponent has noted they'll provide medical services. At this point in time, again, it's unclear what they are. We would like to see proponents of this size and scale to be bringing their own GP to town. As I mentioned, as we already have a shortage of GP's, what's happening is the pressure is being put on our emergency department for very minor ailments. And additionally - just this project alone, the 500 workers would put a significant pressure.

Gulgong doesn't have a full-time medical service in terms of - there isn't a hospital, the doctor there full time. Dunedoo doesn't have a full-time medical service. And as I mentioned, Mudgee is incredibly stretched and we're very happy to provide further information. So, we'd actually like to see to be part of the conditions that part of that workforce needs to include a doctor that is servicing them. And I understand there's notes in the draft consents about workforce management plans. I think I just want to point out we want to have sign off of those, not to be in consultation.

So, a lot of the consent conditions note council to be consulted. I think we'd like the point that we can actually approve. We're concerned that the consultation could be - we've told council about it and it will go to the secretary who will then approve those things. So certainly in terms of that work plan, the accommodation camp - we again appreciate the developer took the feedback that we are unable to deal with that side of workforce in our towns. We're currently under a significant housing shortage, like a lot of regional Australia, but in particular, at the moment we have other solar projects in town that have increased our rental prices on standard properties significantly, and we have a very strong housing shortage. And we also have a tourism market we're trying to protect. So because originally proponents wanted to basically take out our hotels and we'd have no tourism industry left. So we appreciate the camp being constructed. However, I guess we are looking for a little bit more information around that camp, how it will operate. And how the - we, I guess we're looking for more sign off versus a tick and flick. And that's probably our main comment around the camps.

MR CAM: (Indistinct)

MS AZAR: And then. Sorry. Go Brad, please.

MR CAM: Sorry. Brad Cam again. Just again on the camps. One of the things that we're still unclear how they're going to service the camp with drinking water, how they're going to deal with the waste water on that campsite, and then the waste itself generated from that site, and it's still unclear as to where they're going to get that - those essential services to that camp. Sorry, Alina. You keep going.

MS AZAR: No. That's fine. I was probably just going to add the and one other final missing part of the puzzle for us at the moment in regards to the camp is the work, the construction workforce of the camp. And again I believe it's sort of 6 to 7 months to construct that camp. We actually don't know where those workers are going to be based or where they're going to be housed. So we have concerns around those social issues in terms of housing, medical services, as I mentioned, and then in particular further infrastructure services like water and sewer. And then we finally probably also would like to note from a social fabric point of view, we have currently got two solar farms under construction in our region.

It has led to a change in the social environment of the town and even the town of Gulgong in particular. That's very close to all of this. And as you can see on the map it's - this - I've got my cursor. Hopefully you can see that? It's right near all these projects. So we're looking for a strong influence that the code of conduct and work behaviour is something that we can entwine into conditions. The problem or difficulties we have is that we deal with proponents as in owners of projects. However, then there's contractors and subcontractors, so seeing things spilt down the whole way down to the person who's on the ground and being respectful of code of conduct or other items that we want to address in terms of social fabric are probably quite important as well. I'm happy to leave it at that for an intro, if that makes -

MR CAM: Yeah. Well, I don't know whether do you want us to continue or do you want to, is there something else that you would like to ask of us first, or –

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** Actually, I'd like to ask a couple of clarifying questions. I guess, particularly of Alina. So thank you - really helpful. So let's start at the point that you finished on you talked about change in the social fabric of small towns such as Gulgong. Can you speak about what that is?

10 **MS AZAR:** Yes. So because the construction workforce of the current projects, it's predominantly backpackers. What we're finding is other workforces are major projects we've had that are - their long-term workforce is there's certainly a change in behaviour. So there's simple things from common courtesy behaviours, but through to the relationship council has with the mines in regards to high-vis in town and behaviour of workers. So and Brad can probably explain it even further. We have a
15 very close relationship with the mines, where we talk quite close in terms of what's expected of staff and workers in town so that we can uphold our tourism town image. Brad, you might want to explain that further.

20 **MR CAM:** Yeah. Thank you Alina. What we've been very concerned about and working as council is we are a tourist destination. We've been voted the number one destination in Australia two years in a row. And for any tourists that comes to the Mid-Western region, they wouldn't know we were a coal mining town. And so there are no coal mining vehicles, there are no dirty vehicles, there are nobody walking around the streets in hi-vis. And that's been done deliberately with the mines. That
25 fabric has completely been turned on its head since these two construction projects have happened, these solar project.

We've tried to talk to the developers in letting them understand that's our expectation. But as Alina alluded to, it is moving to subcontractors and then further sublet
30 contractors. And they have no regard for code of conduct, driver behaviour in the towns and wearing high-vis dirty coming straight off the site. And it's something that we want to start with all of these other proponents coming in the future, we want to be able to address that issue and be able to continue to have our region an attractive region for tourists and visitors alike.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. We understand what you're saying to us. Can I ask just one additional question? And I certainly understand the importance of the image of the area for visitors. Are you also implying that there's an increase in antisocial behaviour, or is it really more not a respect for your strategy around being a major
40 visitor destination?

MS AZAR: Do you want me to answer, Brad? There's a little bit of both in that answer. You go, Brad.

45 **MR CAM:** No. You speak to Alina. That's fine.

MS AZAR: I was going to say there's a little bit of both in that answer. So, yes, we have had experience - we've had previous projects done similar where, yes, we had an increase in behaviour, poor behaviour in pubs and clubs and the police involved in more alcohol induced incidents.

5 And we've had situations where I guess a hotel might rent a room for two people and suddenly there's 6 or 8 in there. And that has been from workers from projects of similar size and of similar nature. Again, Brad has a lot to do with the police department and lots of catch ups. And that's someone - we've been asking to be involved in the process and engagement for these projects, both from a workforce and management, but also camps. We do have a concern, and I know the local police 10 have some concerns around the influx. And again, I understand this projects 500 or 800. But we're looking at 5,000 plus workers in our region who are young backpackers and I understand want to have a great time, but we have a significant concern around the potential issues around alcohol and similar substance, potential 15 dangers.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you. And Alina, before I hand over to others for questions can I just step back into the information you were giving us about and talk about medical facilities? Could you give us a thumbnail sketch of what is there in the 20 region? So, for example, the hospital hubs are where are there sort of part time facilities. So just draw it for us in pictures, word picture.

MS AZAR: Yeah, absolutely. So actually, I might let Brad talk because he deals with the health council. But Brad, do you want to talk through the what's in Gulgong, 25 Dunedoo and Mudgee? Because it's very limited.

MR CAM: Gulgong has a MPS and as (indistinct) of last Friday, and you wouldn't know this Alina, the doctor has resigned from the hospital. So there is actually no GP in Gulgong. And so the hospital is now going back to advertising to try and fill that 30 position. There is only a GP in Dunedoo two days a week. And again, it has just an NPS as well. So the hospital is really Mudgee and Mudgee has a full time doctor service and as well as emergency service department, but only eight beds. And we've recognised that if this impact of camps, the number of camps in the 5,000 workers that Alina has alluded to, the Western Area Health are very concerned the impacts of 35 shown that there needs to be at least an additional eight emergency department beds in the hospital to be able to cope with this influx of projects. And they've also understood how many extra ambulance will be required, paramedics that will be required to be able to service those camps and deal with the issues. And that's why we're really keen to see a condition of consent, that there is a doctor on site at those 40 camps looking after those 500-600 people, 700 people. Thank you.

MS AZAR: And from a numbers point of view, currently in our LGA and we're it's probably worse now because we just lost two - I didn't know about Gulgong but also in Mudgee lost two GPS who have decided to exit and they haven't been replaced. 45 We're currently at one resident, so one doctor to 1,168 residents. That's our current ratio today. So even adding 500 people, you can understand why we're concerned. I, today, cannot get a GP appointment for a minimum of 4 weeks.

So that's why we have people using the emergency department even for things that are not typically a critical incident, but because you can't get into a GP and that's the stat today.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yeah. So the only ED is at Mudgee, it has 8 beds. Mudgee Hospital obviously is a 24 hour medical facility. And then there are multi-purpose services in Gulgong and Dunedoo. Is that a summary of what you've just said to us?

MR CAM: Yes. That's right.

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MS AZAR: Correct. Without a dedicated doctor in Dunedoo and Gulgong at the MPs, they share the GP role.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Understand. Okay, so at this point, can I ask my fellow Commissioners if there are issues they'd like to talk about? And Brad, then we'll come back to you if you'd like to lead us through a discussion on other topics. You know, if you care to do that. So first of all, Duncan, do you have questions?

20 **MR MARSHALL:** I do, and actually, one quick one was that the acronym that you're using and referring to medical services, NPS, MPS?

MS MILLIGAN: Multi-Purpose Service.

25 **MR MARSHALL:** Right.

MR MARSHALL: Yes. Which is what a nurse led doctor and nurse (indistinct)?

30 **MR CAM:** Yeah. Nurse led, doctor part time. Yes, with telehealth video conferencing -

MR MARSHALL: And -

MR CAM: And a place for transfer straight out.

35 **MR MARSHALL:** Yeah. I guess I'm kind of one bigger question I was going to ask was whether you're going to make a submission, which includes suggestions regarding the conditions of consent which touch on the points that you've made. And that's a kind of general question, but I was interested in whether there are lessons to be learned from your experience with the mining operators in your area. And if you
40 could perhaps explain to us, what's the mechanism they - you together have in place, which results in the kind of management of their workers, their subcontractors, whatever it is, in order to achieve what seems to be a good and working model for industry outside of your towns?

45 **MR CAM:** Yes, I'm happy to explain. The mayor and myself have a quarterly mine managers meeting with the three mine managers. Well, now four with an extra mine being Bowdens Silver Mine starting. So, every quarter we meet, we go through

issues that they're having. And we have built a very strong relationship around that cohesion to ensure that their staff and contractors adhere to a code of conduct and expectation that we want from, from them living in our community. And it's just that long term strong relationship, very open dialogue.

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If they've got a problem with us or we've got a problem with them, we feel very comfortable being able to raise those issues and they get addressed, particularly around driver behaviour as well heading out to the mines from the towns of Gulgong and Mudgee. So that has been a - in the past, an ongoing problem with them, with speeding and dangerous driving. So there's a rule of thumb that if you are - that everybody knows that your number plate can be handed over to the mine managers, and those people will be disciplined and given one chance only in their behaviour. Otherwise they lose their job. And it's happened in the past. So it's that strong relationship.

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MR MARSHALL: Okay, so that sounds like a really good model and example. I wonder whether that sort of that periodic meeting is underpinned by plans or guidance or sort of a documentation layer to kind of sketch out some ground rules.

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MR CAM: We don't formally, we - I take notes, but we don't formally. I document those, but if there's issues, I'll send that in an email to the three mine managers. The difficulty with the proponents here is that we're not getting that same level of communication and engagement. Because once they get their approval, they're on to engaging subcontractors and other subcontractors and contractors who don't come and meet with us at all. And that's something that I'd like to start seeing an opportunity for us to sit in a round table with these subcontractors so they understand and build that same relationship with them as we have with the mines.

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MS MILLIGAN: All right.

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MR MARSHALL: I'll finish there.

MS MILLIGAN: You're okay?

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MR MARSHALL: Yeah.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Suellen, over to you. Do you have questions for clarification?

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MS FITZGERALD: Thanks, Janett. Again, going to this the social impacts of the workforce in the situation of your local mines, are they predominantly in on site accommodation or no, they're living in the community? And –

MR CAM: Yes.

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MS FITZGERALD: I'm wondering if you see some potential benefits from the fact that there would be on site accommodation for this project, including, you know, a

wet mess and food service and so on. Do you see that as being positive, in relation to anti-social behaviour and courtesy in town and so on?

MS AZAR: Yes.

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MR CAM: Yes we do we and that's why we're supportive of it. Council in the past have never been supportive of workers camps. But there is a need. There is a small one now being built at one of the mines, 100 work camp for an expansion that they're undertaking. And again, we're supportive of that because it's the best way to handle that behaviour.

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Obviously there's a policing issue to ensure that those camp - those people staying in camp with a wet mess are being responsible the way they drive when they finish at the end of a week if they're heading away or going for a - because we're very mindful that we don't want them working seven days a week, as we said in our submission. We want them only to be working - we're happy with six days a week, so they will be looking for social activities on that Sunday. And we're mindful of that impact and the impacts on the roads of having those people out in vehicles.

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MS FITZGERALD: Sorry. Did you want to say something else to that?

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MR MARSHALL: Oh it's just about the say to, the police also have concerns because Gulgong only has one policeman and Dunedoo only has one policeman. And these camps are predominantly in that area. There's a number of camps being proposed, so they're equally concerned about how they're going to manage the social behaviour.

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MS FITZGERALD: Talking about concerns, is council happy with the where you've landed with the VPA - with the proponents - the planning?

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MR CAM: Yes.

MS AZAR: Yes. And yes. As we've got to a point where we're comfortable in the agreement, we're still finalising details. But in terms of conceptually, yes.

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MS FITZGERALD: And I noticed that there's a general cooperative and collaborative arrangement with Warrumbungle Council, which is good to see.

MS AZAR: Yes, we have both informal and formal catch ups with Warrumbungle Council and Dubbo Council because of the REZ and trying to share knowledge and information. Yeah, the councils work well.

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MS FITZGERALD: I've noticed in some other councils that are entering into VPAs with these sort of projects, they're considering doing, preparing some kind of benefit strategy so that they can look more comprehensively, I guess, at how they spend these VPAs. Is that something that you've got in mind?

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MR CAM: Yes. Look, we have a very strong what we call a community plan proposals where the community can write in at our budget process, which is generally December and January each year with any proposal or any idea that not only council money, but also VPA money can be used for and then the council will make decisions on how that money is spent. But we're also mindful that we need to be looking at things that strategically rather than just small projects. And, but we have a very robust program for the whole of community to be able to participate in how that money is spent.

10 **MS FITZGERALD:** On a more minor matter, the cycle trail, the Central West cycle trail, looks like it's going -

MR CAM: Central west cycle trail, yeah?

15 **MS FITZGERALD:** Yeah. It looks like it's going right through the project. Is that well used by tourists and locals in the community? What do you think the impact is going to be there?

MR CAM: It is very well used. It's very well known. And it is absolutely amazing how many people know about that, that ride and undertake that ride. Look, it's all on local unsealed, mainly on unsealed roads. We just once we know exactly. And it's very - we're very keen to understand their transport routes for their products coming from wherever. Whether it's some of it will obviously be coming from Port of Newcastle, but they'll be coming from other locations. So we want to be able to understand exactly their transport routes, which we don't have at the moment. So we can then liaise with people like the Central West Cycling Group to understand the level of truck movements and vehicle movements that are going to be on some of those local roads.

30 **MS FITZGERALD:** So it's largely the construction phase that concerns you about the impacts on that cycle way.

MR CAM: Yes. Absolutely. Yes.

35 **MS FITZGERALD:** Janett, that's my current questions, I'll leave it there.

MS MILLIGAN: So Brad, we're probably okay to hand back to you now if you want to keep talking to us about any of your issues?

40 **MR CAM:** Yeah, sure. Thank you very much. I think one of the other things that we're hearing from neighbours is that this proponent has not entered into any neighbourhood agreements prior to this approval, which is a bit unusual, we're quite surprised. And the neighbours that are on the boundaries of this project have not been consulted or had any agreements put in place. So it's something that we strongly feel that needs to be brought to their attention via this process that these people are upset that they haven't been chatted to and entered into agreements like other proponents have done.

MS MILLIGAN: Brad, can I just ask a question about that? Is your understanding that these are people who are maybe beyond the criteria for consultation with the company? Or are these people who, you know, are adjacent to the proposal and you would have thought would be in discussions first questions, and second, are you hearing it from individual constituents, or is there organised groups of interested neighbours who are approaching you?

MR CAM: So to answer the first question, it's actually people right up against the project. So adjacent neighbours that are going to be experiencing visual impact. And it's individuals at this point. There are collective groups around in the Dunedoo, and I've certainly meet with large groups of Dunedoo residents and farmers, as well as the Birriwa area, Tallawang area residents as well. But particularly with this project coming to the IPC. I've had some individual landowners that are butting up to this project who have said that they have not been approached and have not entered into neighbourhood agreements.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

MR CAM: Alina, is there any other points that we feel that I mean, we've put a lot in our submission, so.

MS AZAR: Yeah. Look, I think probably worth noting. And again, because we're in the early experiencing the construction of two currently we've been through one. That, to be honest, was (indistinct) for our community. The first project that was built two things that are lessons learned from those so far. One is around landscaping and then the visual impact. So visual impact obviously is managed generally through either redesign or through landscaping. And again we appreciate Department has requested landscaping planting to be done prior to construction, really important. However there's still no guarantees in those consent conditions in regards to actually ensuring that they are going to succeed.

So our experience with Birriwa Solar Farm, we're now five years in and there's still plantings that are not - that have never grown at all. The proponent, that proponent has asked for extensions and, but has never got anywhere. So we're - the people in that area are still looking at the exact same site they looked at five years ago when it was built. So, I mean, I think we'd be looking for some kind of guarantees around success of the plantings or if not, guarantee if they're planting seedlings. If not, then we need to start being smart about the size of plants that we're requesting to be planted. So that is of a big concern because we've experienced first-hand that issue with Beryl and we particularly don't want to hear excuses.

Well, the climate isn't great for these plants. They need to get it right the first time. So I would like to highlight that something that - I'd like the Commissioners to look at.

MS MILLIGAN: So can I just jump in there, Alina, if I can.

MS AZAR: Yeah.

MS MILLIGAN: So are you saying to us that maybe the primary issue there was what was being planted?

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MS AZAR: They planted twice and twice it failed because they didn't have the water supply organised to water the plant, and they planted the wrong plants.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

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MR CAM: I was going to say the fact that they - it was the fact that they provided no maintenance to the plantings both times. No weeding and no watering, So no tube stock is going to survive if it's not watered and not kept weed free.

15 **MS FITZGERALD:** And that was the Beryl?

MS MILLIGAN: (Indistinct) that was used?

MR CAM: Yes. It was.

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MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

MS FITZGERALD: That was the Beryl Solar Farm?

25 **MR CAM:** Yes.

MS AZAR: Yeah. (Indistinct) still hasn't met its obligations. Sorry, Brad.

30 **MR CAM:** I do have one other point that I've put on my notes to make sure that got across, and that is the concerns that we're having with you know, the two projects that are on the ground at the moment is that there seems to be no local supplier policy. That's that tends to be the locals are missing out on jobs. They're missing out on opportunities. And I think there needs to be some form of local preference policy. So to ensure this is one of the selling points of these projects is to be able to offer
35 opportunities and growth opportunities for business in the region. And they're not getting that opportunity. And we've had businesses come to us and say they're being blocked out of the jobs because they are - yeah, they're not of course this is on record, I'm not going to be prepared to say why.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. The workforce in issue is an interesting one. So you're saying even though proponents I suppose, are cautious about the challenges they're going to face in securing workforce, you're saying that local workforce is not being used, not being tapped.

45 **MS AZAR:** Local businesses.

MR CAM: No, it's not.

MS AZAR: So local subcontractors. And I think that's part of the problem with the model of these projects. So we have the owner, then they have a head contractor who then brings on the subcontractors. So the head contractors have their own
5 relationships and they're not bringing on them the local level subcontractors. And that could be, you know, whether it's electricians, whether it's the crane companies, whether it's earthworks. Now, some have been used, but we certainly know - are aware of certain other businesses that are saying we could do this work and they're not being given the opportunities. So it's not probably the day to day workers.

10 It's definitely those businesses that could be the suppliers to the projects. And for us, that's a huge concern because I guess this renewable energy zone and these proponents projects are being pouted as providing a great boost to our local economy and jobs. But we have a 1.5% unemployment rate, so it's not filling the jobs. We're
15 already short jobs, but certainly in terms of business opportunities and opportunities for our local businesses to grow and expand, this is a great - would be a great opportunity. But if they're not being given that local preference first, then they're not getting the jobs. So it actually is not delivering economic benefits to our region at this point in time. We don't see it as a great win for the local economy.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Thank you for clarifying.

MR CAM: Reinforce.

25 **MS AZAR:** I guess the only other couple of points I've got of note. So the ACEN have listened that we don't have the facilities for general waste. And so they have noted - and it's noted in the department's report that waste will probably go to Dubbo Regional Council by agreement. But that - there's no truck movements or there's no
30 traffic impact studies on that kind of thing in their report. So we do have some concern. I believe the road they're probably going to use is Goolma Road. And for us that's probably an issue in terms of increased traffic on a road that does have traffic incidents. So we need more information around that. Same if they plan on taking pumped out waste to Dubbo. So those track truck movements, those sort of ancillary
35 movements of supplying and supporting services that hasn't been considered in any traffic management plans to date at all? That's something I'd probably prefer - I'd like to flag.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. So, Alina, do you have other points to talk to us about?

MS AZAR: I'm just checking my notes, to be honest.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. No, take your time.

45 **MS AZAR:** Yeah. That's okay. I'm ticking off our comments for you.

MR CAM: And I don't. I've got through all my notes that I wanted to raise, so there's nothing further from me. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks, Brad.

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MS AZAR: I think outside of transport and traffic, and we've talked about Castlereagh Highway impacts and local road impacts. We do want to ensure we have approval of the transport management - traffic management plan at the moment. Again, approval - just consultation of that plan sits, we are a marked as a
10 consultation partner, not as an approver. Because they're our local roads, we like to see the words change and the consent to say that we would approve that. And then the final comment, probably around the camp is at the moment they've noted it to be operational for the duration of the construction of the battery and solar project, of which is about 28 months and that it should be decommissioned within 12 months of
15 commissioning of the solar array, unless used otherwise by ACEN and developments. I think we just want to ensure that if it is going to be, the life of that camp is going to be extended, that we are certainly part of that approval process to extend that camp and that we're aware of it because it does have knock on effects to our community. So I'm happy there's a decommissioning line in the consent
20 conditions, but we certainly want to be part of any discussions to extend the life of that too.

MS MILLIGAN: Now, can I ask you your comment about counsel's request to be in the approval system for traffic planning? I'm just wondering in terms of the
25 mining industry. In the local government area, was that your experience with mining? I guess I'm wondering, Is there something that you know, you can refer to or an experience you've had?

MR CAM: Again with the mines, with their expansions. They inform us as to their
30 transport routes. And I think I look at the Bowden Silver Mine that just got approval. All of their transport routes were shown to us and adjusted because of comments that we made. And then we signed off on those transport routes approving them. So yes, we have done that in the past for the mines. So we want to see that, as Alina has alluded to, for all of these projects.

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MS MILLIGAN: So how are we going? Are we through the issues?

MR CAM: Yes.

40 **MS AZAR:** I'm good. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

MR CAM: Thank you.

45

MS MILLIGAN: All right. Let me do another sweep round. Duncan, do you have questions?

MR MARSHALL: Just one detailed question. You mentioned Golden Highway earlier on. Does that fall within council's responsibility, the maintenance of that, or were you raising it more because it's part of the road network and part of your council area?

MR CAM: It's the - it's part of the road network. It's a state highway. But it is a significant through fare from Port of Newcastle to the REZ. And so that's why RDA Orana has done the impacts and the work that needs to be done, and the upgrades of the Golden Highway to cope with this influx of renewable components, both wind and solar and battery that's going to come from Port of Newcastle to this area.

MR MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: Suellen?

MS FITZGERALD: Just one. Janett. Looking at the map there with the metheon, meth - methery is it? Have I got that correct?

MS AZAR: Merotherie.

MS FITZGERALD: Merotherie the Merotherie energy hub proposal. I presume that council is in regular consultation with EnergyCo. Is that the case?

MR CAM: Yes. I and the other two general managers sit on the steering committee of EnergyCo. So, we meet regularly. Yes.

MS FITZGERALD: Right. Okay, good. Thank you. That's all from me, Janett.

MS MILLIGAN: All right. So, I think that we have asked our questions, so it's probably just for me to say thank you very much to both Brad and Alina for meeting with us this afternoon. Thank you for the additional information that you provided us. And thank you for answering all our questions and queries. So, thank you very much.

MS AZAR: Thank you.

MR CAM: Thank you.

<THE MEETING CONCLUDED