

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS MILLIGAN: Good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land today and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the country from which we virtually meet today. And I pay my respects to their 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, a 1200 megawatt energy storage facility, an on-site accommodation facility and associated infrastructure approximately 15km south east of Dunedoo in the Mid-Western Regional and the Warrumbungle Shire local government areas. Sites located within the Central West Turana Renewable Energy Zone. So my name's Janett Milligan. I'm the chair of this Commission panel, and I'm joined by my fellow Commissioners, Duncan Marshall, who's sitting here with me, and Suellen Fitzgerald, who's online. We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale online and Geoff Kwok online 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 one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter, and it 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 that's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and you're not in a position to answer, please feel free to take it 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 just so we can ensure an accuracy of the transcript. And can I ask also, as we begin if I could ask each of the elected members of our council who are joining us to please introduce yourself and, if applicable, just to provide a verbal declaration of any actual or potential personal interests that you may have in the project. So thank you for that. And let's begin. And I'd like to begin by handing over to council to to start us off and talk to us about the issues that you would like to canvas this afternoon.

MR DOOLAN: Good afternoon. I'll just introduce myself. First off, my name is Ambrose Doolan, and I'm the Mayor of Warrumbungle Shire. And I'm joined in this room by two of the directors of our council.

MS BENSON: Good afternoon. My name is Nicole Benson. I'm the Director of Technical Services.

MS RYAN: And I'm Leeanne Ryan on the Director, Environment and Development Services.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

MR DOOLAN: We have our General Manager, Mr. Roger Bailey. He's just there. Hello, Roger.

5 **MR BAILEY:** Mr Mayor and Commissioners. Yeah. My name is Roger Bailey, General Manager of Warrumbungle Shire Council.

MR DOOLAN: And another part of our team, he's an essential part of our team, too, is Mr. Warwick Giblin, who we might let you (indistinct) off if you'd like there.

10 **MR GIBLIN:** Thanks. Thanks, Ambrose. Hello Commissioners. It's great to be here and to have this opportunity to have a discussion with you. So yes, my name is Warwick Giblin. I'm an adjunct professor attached to the University of New England. In recognition of the work I do for rural societies in the face of major mining and renewable energy developments across the country. So it's been my
15 pleasure to assist Warrumbungle Shire Council in relation to all REZ matters.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

20 **MR DOOLAN:** Alright, before I get to go on there, Warrick - I'll also introduce our Deputy Mayor, Kathryn Rindfleish. My apologies there. Kath, you were just down as a Zoom user, so -

MS RINDFLEISH: That's okay. Thank you. Yes. Councillor Kathy Rindfleish.

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Good to meet you all. Thank you. So, Mr. Mayor or General Roger, are you going to take us through your agenda for this afternoon? Because we're happy to start with you. And if you would like to talk to us, we'll then sort of come in with our questions and points of clarification.

30 **MR BAILEY:** We were first going to have the Mayor just have a quick overview of the Shire, and then we'll get into some other issues.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

35 **MR DOOLAN:** Okay. Well, thanks. So just a brief introduction about our part of the world. Warrumbungle the Shire is about 12,500 square kilometres, 9250 people as of the last census. And we're going to be at the pointy end of this renewable energy transition because we're going to have, so far, 10 projects within our shire plus the transmission lines. And within - have to correct me if I'm wrong here,
40 Warwick, within 16km of this project, there's going to be 25 projects in total. So we'll be, whether we like it or not - and there's a lot of people who don't like it - we're going to be very heavily impacted by the cumulative effects of all of this forced industrialisation that's coming to our part of the world. We've got a lot of concerns about the cumulative impacts on our roads, which we'll speak to later, and who's
45 going to be held accountable to maintain our road network, which is not really designed for this amount of heavy traffic that's going to be funnelled down it over the coming years.

We're concerned about the workforce that will be coming to our part of the world, numbering in the thousands. So where are all these people going to get a drink of water from? That's not being explained properly. Where is their liquid wastes and solid waste going to go? How are we going to be impacted socially with, you know, 5 if we get 5,000 people coming to the area to rebuild all of these things, and even 1% of them are bad actors, that's a lot of people that we don't have the police currently to - a lot of these towns don't have police at the minute. We don't have the doctors in the southern part of the Shire to look after the people of there already. Where or how is that all going to work? So and it is having our people in our communities at each 10 other's throats about these developments, whether they're for them or against them, and really driving our communities apart.

If I could just - we just got an email in which I would like to read if I could. From the Coolah District Development Group. They sent this into the council, and I thought 15 this would be an appropriate place for me to just quickly read it out. It's only a couple of paragraphs. So it just says

"On behalf of the Coolah District Development Group, I would like to raise awareness of the impact of the many renewable energy projects and the 20 proposed development of the Orana Central West Renewable Energy Zone is having on our town and surrounding community. The Coolah community has endured many struggles and natural disasters in recent years, including prolonged drought, devastating fire and mouse plagues, along with reduced access to medical care and other government services.

25 In response, we have raised funds and built supportive networks so as to support the community and bridge the gap left by government, helping each other has got most of us through. The renewable energy projects and developments have had added a whole new level of stress and anxiety to our community. We fear our 30 pristine countryside will evolve into an industrial zone. There is a feeling that we are largely powerless and under-resourced, and lack the expertise and support to adequately defend our community and present our case. We are a small community up against government and world resource renewable energy companies.

35 The playing field is not even and a major consequence is the social divide that is now apparent in our community. The wider Coolah community must have advocacy and government support to address these issues. Having coordinated community input in all areas of planning, construction and community benefit 40 schemes would assist in creating respect and a way for most of us to work together for the betterment of Coolah and the surrounding villages. Working hard to build a partnership with our community will be mutually beneficial and help ensure positive, sustainable long term survival and flourishing of Coolah."

45 And it signed Katie Burgess, who's the chair of the Coolah District Development Group. And I just wanted her and her groups message read into the record. So that's a brief introduction of our district and where we are. And I would defer to the directors and the GM and like, if there's any more that you would like.

MR BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Just to expand on a few things that you've just spoken about as the mayor mentioned, there's a number of different projects which are going to impact directly on our LGA. Now, there are those which are situated within our LGA and those which are situated just across the border. So, we have, I think, about 11 projects, including the transmission line, either within our boundary or well, basically within our boundary in some form. And then there are a number just across the boundary. The transmission line is being designed for about 4.5 megawatt - sorry, gigawatt capacity. And in the first instance, and that's going to get upgraded to about six gigawatts in the next stage.

The transmission that is going to be generated just by the projects located in or partially within our LGA will cover off on over six gigawatts in its in their own right. So that's going to be a very significant amount of capacity that's going to be generated from within the Warrumbungle Shire. As the mayor said, there is a bit of disquiet within our communities about these projects happening. That's not to say everyone is against. It's just saying that there is no or there are those who are for and against the projects. I'd have to say that council's biggest concerns tend to be around things like cumulative impacts of these projects, and that's not really getting taken into account in the overall consideration of the renewable energy zone.

And the concern for me has been that the renewable energy zone itself has been around for several years now, but we're playing catch up or constantly playing catch up with the zone. So much so that we've had acknowledgement even by the Department of Planning just recently, that a number of the things that they are making changes to in order to accommodate the renewable energy zone won't actually come into place for the Central West Orana REZ. We're going to be - we're the pioneers and all the benefits of our work is going to be coming or going to the following renewable energy zones. I currently sit on the SteerCo committee for the Central West. So that's the group of general managers, along with EnergyCo and various government agencies. And there has been a number of concerns raised there about the cumulative impacts of the renewable energy zone on our communities.

And that's primary reason why SteerCo was established was to try to identify and deal with a lot of those issues. So the Mayor touched on a few of those then but certainly doctors, policing, emergency services, schooling, housing, all those sorts of things are issues that we're trying to address. But unfortunately we're not going to be able to achieve what we want to because the time frame is just not there for us. In addition to the cumulative impacts or to ameliorate the cumulative impacts, we certainly have been asking for these generators to pay a planning agreement to council. And one of the concerns that we have had not with all of the generators some of the generators have been really good, but there have been some generators who have been using planning agreements or voluntary planning agreements funding to divide council and the community. So some have gone directly to the community making all sorts of promises about what they'll do, but have not considered or involved council in some of those discussions.

And it's leading people to believe that in some instances, there'll be a lot of money coming their way, but they don't understand what the impacts of that is going to be on council and the finances of council. I think I'll leave it at that. We've got Warwick online. Unless one of the directors wants to say something further. But we've got
5 Warwick online, and Warwick's going to be dealing with a number of those issues that have been raised around traffic, accommodation, cumulative impacts. Sorry, one thing I do need to mention also is that when we talk about waste and water, I think that waste water actually gets left off that list. So that's something that really needs to be considered in the mix of issues as well. So if I could hand to you, Warwick,
10 please?

MR GIBLIN: Thank you, Roger. Is it okay if I call you madam, Chair? Is that appropriate - madam? How would you like to be addressed?

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** It's fine for you to call me, Janett.

MR GIBLIN: Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: If you feel comfortable with that, I certainly do.
20

MR GIBLIN: Okay. Thank you, Janett. And hello, Suellen from our - I've met you before at WSN days. And nice to meet you, sir. Can I say - or, firstly, have you received our briefing note?

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, we have, thank you.

MR GIBLIN: Okay. Do you have any questions in relation to that, or would you like to save them till a bit later?

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Look, what we might do is give you the opportunity to speak. And I know that we're collecting our questions and points of clarification as we go. So why don't you tell us what you'd like to tell us, direct our attention as you see fit, and we'll come in after that.

35 **MR GIBLIN:** Thank you very much. The first thing I would like to say is. What's facing the region of the Central West, namely Dubbo, Mudgee, Coonabarabran, those three local government areas, is a monumental challenge and the potential for very significant disruption and disturbance where a 200-year-old rural landscape and rural society and rural culture is suddenly being confronted with a myriad of quasi
40 industrial developments. This has - this poses, as you can well appreciate, a major challenge for those communities and that society. Particularly when, Janett and Commissioners, I think the real challenge here is - what are the environmental, social and economic costs and benefits? So the way the council has examined each of these projects is through that prism, and those three parameters - environmental, social and
45 economic. And then we try and identify what are the benefits in each of those categories and who secures that benefit? And on the other hand, what are the costs and who are bearing those costs?

Now in relation to the renewable energy zone developments, a feature here is that the jobs and we predict it'll be somewhere in the order of, potentially up to 10,000 workers in and around the region between 2026 and 2030. These things will blow out and be longer than you might envisage. But those jobs are temporary. They are for the construction phase only, predominantly. And unlike the developments in the Hunter Valley where there are - in 2018, there were 41 coal mines. The upside there was at least there were job opportunities long-term for residents and ratepayers of those shires. Albeit, there are other people that fly in, fly out, etc, drive in, drive out. But the challenge here is what are these various costs and benefits and who's carrying the costs and who's wearing the benefits? What I would say is furthermore a pivotal issue for Warrumbungle Shire is it is the Roads Authority in relation to local roads.

Just to be clear, transport for New South Wales is only responsible for the highways and the major regional roads. But all the other roads - and for example, we have about 2,800km in Warrumbungle Shire. A lot of those local roads - there's no doubt if you've travelled on them, you'll know from first-hand experience - a lot of them are not to flash, right? There's lots of bends, lots of bumps. And the big challenge that council as local government faces is what's going to happen to those local roads. Now, to be clear, we have no confidence that the roads that are prescribed in these development consents, Janett and your fellow Commissioners - we have no confidence that they will be the only roads that the traffic associated with these developments stays on. Sure as eggs, these back roads develop into rat runs just like it happens in Sydney. You are going to have rat runs where construction workers, etc. will be driving on these roads which are not being safeguarded or accommodated or protected in the conditions of consent.

Now, even in relation to the conditions of consent on for Birriwa, we do not believe that the road conditions go far enough, particularly in terms of, for example, it talks about a traffic management plan. And it says, you know - it says in one of the conditions, well in B4 that traffic must avoid the use of Merotherie Road and the Birriwa bus route. Well, I ask you - what are the provisions that are going to apply such that traffic does avoid those roads, right? We would urge you, as the Commissioners on this matter, to require to make the conditions of consent more robust and more transparent so that there are measurement strategies put in place like GPS data - data monitoring of vehicles. So it's transparent about which roads, in fact, these workers are using and so there's transparency and accountability around who is using which roads and that data is made fully transparent on their websites and that data is shared with local government and Transport for New South Wales.

I say this is important because if you have an isolated mine somewhere that's developed in a region, that's fine. But in this case, like in Warrumbungle Shire, we're going to have 9-10 developments. We will have no idea who owns which vehicles, who's responsible for its roads, right? And there's 40 odd across the REZ. I strongly urge the Commission to look carefully at how we can have more rigour and discipline and accountability built into these conditions of consent so that critically, local government and hence the ratepayers don't have to cough up and pay for the extra damage done to these roads. So roading is really important.

We've got suggestions as to how those conditions pursuant to roading should be amended, and we're happy to share that with you. The other thing, Janett and Commissioners, that's been a real bugbear is right from day one - and this is fundamentally why council has objected not just to this project, but to most of them -
5 is because fundamentally, the government has not done any of the preparatory or substantial work to identify the cumulative impacts, right? We have been advocating on this matter since day dot. And there was a belated attempt in 2023 by EnergyCo to make some attempt at looking at the cumulative impact stuff. I'm sure EnergyCo will be the first to admit it was a fairly cursory exercise that they conducted. And of
10 as in our briefing note, you will see Mid-Western Regional Council at its own initiative - funded PwC to do a study on this cumulative impact stuff.

This is so, so important. And I'm intrigued that the assessment report, tabled by DPHI, in relation to this project, says in its executive summary Roman numeral three
15 - the department has considered the potential cumulative impacts of other developments in the region and considers, quote "there would be no significant cumulative traffic, visual or noise impacts due to distances and haulages." Yet on page 5, it says there are 16 SSD renewable energy projects within 25km of the project site. I fail to see how you cannot have cumulative impacts when you've got
20 16 projects within 25 km's of this site. And the department now acknowledges - Clay Preshaw told us only a week ago that they recognised that more work has to be done in the Central West on cumulative impact assessment, and that they're going to also do the same now for New England REZ and the Southwest REZ.

I mean Roger hinted had a few matters around the social impacts. You've no doubt heard it from Mid-Western as well. And, you know, these are critical. The other thing I would say is the - to be frank, there's been a lot of learning by doing within government pursuant to what the SEARS ought to be for these major projects, the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements, right? For what should be
30 covered in the EIS. Initially, they did not require a temporary worker accommodation camps, okay? So you know, and at least the department heard the likes of Warrumbungle in Mid-Western and Dubbo and say that his SEARS were amended and hence the developers all had to then backtrack and come up with TWAs - temporary worker accommodation camps, okay?

35 So, to give department its credit, at least that thing was identified because clearly there was going to be a huge shortage of accommodation if that initiative had not taken place. Look, I'd just like to leave it there. I mean we could go on, but as I say, in terms of the traffic, you know, there's a there's 120 heavy vehicles per day during
40 the peak period to go in and out of this site. You know, that is very significant in anyone's language. So 120 heavy vehicles. And that's, you know, 240 trips. So there's a lot of activity to occur here. And we just want to make sure that it's properly accounted for. Happy to take any questions.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. So Roger, did you want to come in at this point, or would you like us to start asking questions and discussing?

MR BAILEY: Unless the directors have got something to add on. I'm fine for you to start asking questions. Sorry, there is one other thing. In addition to the generators across the region, we also have other developments occurring. So there is a quarry which is being set up just across our border in the upper Hunter Shire. And then of course, there are mine developments in the Mid-Western LGA as well, but open to questions.

MS MILLIGAN: I might just start with one point of clarification. You talked about the VPA and the impact on the community. Can you just clarify that for me? Because we understand that a VPA has been agreed with this proponent the money will flow through to Mid-Western, and you have an agreement with that council. And is it my understanding that the voluntary planning agreement contributions will be spent in line with your community plan? So if that's the case, I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit more about the nature of the community disunity and the misunderstanding about those benefits.

MR BAILEY: The planning agreement in this particular instance has been negotiated with Mid-West Council. So we can't comment on how the money is going to be spent.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. But by your shire, you mean you can't comment on that?

MR BAILEY: Correct.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

MR BAILEY: Unless I've got something a little bit wrong there, Leeanne. But that's pretty much how it is.

MS RYAN: Yeah. No. That's correct.

MS MILLIGAN: And so the. So can you say a little bit more about the, you talked about the community disunity over benefit payments. So I'd be interested to hear just a bit more about that if you can?

MR BAILEY: Yeah.

MR BAILEY: That was more of a general comment for some of the generators. So there is one generator, not this particular one, a little bit north of where they are, who have been direct to the community, promised certain things to them, but they have not - and they, at that stage, they did not have any conversation with council about how and what they were going to be doing, and court is quite unawares. And as I said in earlier, there are some who have been very good about this, and there are some who have not been, that was more of a generalisation about the renewable energy zone as opposed to this particular developer.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. I understand. Thank you for clarifying that. And so is there anything you wanted to say about this particular development? Community -

5 **MR BAILEY:** I only, I suppose from a community benefit point of view. I don't have anything to add about this particular group in this instance. Leanne, do you have any comments?

MS RYAN: No, I think nothing further there. No.

10 **MR GIBLIN:** I think, if I'm if I may say Janett, I think the quantum of dollars. If any are coming to Warrumbungle Shire, they will be minimal. And my understanding that will be, you know, an arrangement are made between Warrumbungle Shire and Mid-Western Shire. As to what that proportion might or
15 might not look like. But to be fair on all the developments that - which are in our shire, for example, and even where they're cross-border, we are investing huge amount of time and effort in the planning agreement process. There'll be a management committee, we've invested heavily in community involvement in that planning agreement. Management Committee will have formalised evaluation criteria for how the monies is allocated. There'll be annual reporting about the
20 performance of the money that's funded to various projects.

So council, you know, it's a very significant and legally powerful tool, the whole planning agreement stuff. We will be spending a lot of time including with
25 community input and elected officials. So the committee, in summary for us will be chaired by the Mayor. There'll be two elected councillors on it. There'll be four community reps from across the affected areas of the shire, affected communities. So I would hasten to add that certainly in terms of Warrumbungle Shire Council, its approach, we have spent a huge amount of time and effort and consideration into how best the community can have an effective voice in the allocation of funds arising
30 from the development contributions via the projects. And we, to be honest a very satisfied with the approach we've taken here and the deliberation the community input, and we think it will be quite successful.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Thanks, Warwick. All right. Look, at this point. Let me go to my fellow Commissioners. Suellen, I'm going to go to you first. Would you like to sort of start off with questions?

40 **MS FITZGERALD:** Yes, sure. Thanks, Janett. I hear the comments from council in relation to the fact that the inclusion of an accommodation camp in this project is going to be helpful in terms of social impacts. Is the council currently happy or have ongoing concerns? Now that accommodation camp is being proposed?

MR GIBLIN: Roger. Do you want to go first?

45 **MR BAILEY:** Yeah. The accommodation camps are going to be beneficial. Our preference has been for the accommodation camps to be set up either in or adjacent or very close to our communities. That was our preference.

In this particular case, it hasn't been is not going to go that way, but that has been our preference. But we've we're satisfied with in the accommodation camp for this particular development.

5 **MR GIBLIN:** Suellen, can I ask were you asking that question like more broadly, was it just the TWAs or were you thinking more about other aspects of the project, whether we were satisfied with or not.

10 **MS FITZGERALD:** Well Warwick, I was thinking that now that the actual accommodation issue has been addressed, are there wider social impacts that will come from potentially having 500 person accommodation camp, not within your LGA but immediately adjacent the village of Birriwa, etc. So and not far from Dunedoo I'm just wondering if you have ongoing concerns about the wider idea of that accommodation.

15 **MR GIBLIN:** Well, look. You know, what is it? Death by a thousand cuts. You know, one project in and of itself. Its impacts may be minimal. But when you add all these projects up together - and for Warrumbungle Shire, all our projects are aggregated at the southern boundary, in effect, the southern boundary - near the
20 southern boundary of the Shire, which interfaces with Mid-Western, right? So they've got a raft of projects just over the border. So when you add all those projects in together and the workers, then in my experience, my judgement would be the social impacts are going to be significant particularly in terms of social services.

25 **MS FITZGERALD:** Medical services, etc?

MR BAILEY: Medical services. You know, doctors, GP's, medical beds, police, ambulance workers. You know, if you look at the Mid-Western report, I think it -
30 you know, it talked about the need for 30 more paramedics. It talked about the need for eight more GPS, mentioned 8 more emergency department bays and 7 nurses.

MR BAILEY: And that's just in the Mid-West and LGA. It doesn't take into account the Warrumbungle Shire or the Upper Hunter or the Dubbo Regional Council areas.

35 **MS FITZGERALD:** Janett, my other question really is about whether - the council has mentioned options for monitoring of vehicles as they move across local roads. Does council have any such technology already in place? Is that working anywhere you're aware of?

40 **MR BAILEY:** Well for council's own fleet we do have a GPS tracking of our vehicles. So that's installed, not in all of our vehicles, but all of our operational vehicles, it is. So that could be installed in their vehicles as well.

45 **MS FITZGERALD:** Thanks Janett.

MR GIBLIN: Yeah. So for example, what we would be requesting of the IPC, that it have an addition to the effect of something like this, the applicant shall take all reasonable steps to enforce and demonstrate compliance with the prescribed transport and workforce commuter routes to the satisfaction of Transport for New South Wales and the local councils. Such compliance measures may include, inter alia -
5 monitoring of individual vehicles with GPS and geofences, physical works and signage to restrict movements, active surveillance, incentivisation and disciplinary actions, and periodic lodgement of electronic compliance reports with the councils.

10 So I think there's no doubt that technology is available. I think it would be a huge asset and a huge benefit to councils and residents and ratepayers. It just would provide far more transparency about what is happening, because you can well imagine there's going to be workers going left, right and centre. Whose worker is that? Whose vehicle is that? And we'll have devil's own trouble trying to identify any
15 of the recalcitrants.

MS FITZGERALD: Thank you. Thanks, Janett.

MR MARSHALL: I'm actually just a kind of follow on question on this topic - can
20 I just clarify what the concern is with the use of local roads? I mean, is it kind of apportioning responsibility for the wear and tear on roads and therefore who who ends up paying for maintenance of those roads? Or is it the kind of you know, the run of traffic which is causing unwanted vehicle movements on local roads being of concern to local residents. Can you just help me with -

25 **MR MARSHALL:** Yeah, look, to be clear Duncan, we don't mind local roads being used. As long as those roads have been prescribed as the roads for the development and the developer upgrades those roads right at the very start, prior to the commencement of the construction of the project, the developers must upgrade those
30 roads to the standard that satisfies the council. You know, as I said before, under the Roads Act, local government is responsible for these local roads. So it's crucial that the roads be upgraded to a standard that is appropriate to the demands and pressures that the project will be imposing upon it, okay? So they will be paying for that upgrade work. That's fine. They can use any local road they like, so long as they
35 upgrade it and then post the construction and post any upgrading works during the 30-year life and post the decommissioning that on each and every one of those stages where substantial heavy vehicles have come in, they return the road to, you know, as good a condition. So what's important as I say, Duncan, they - as long as the road is prescribed for use, because if it is not prescribed for use, then everything - there's no
40 accountability for the damage that's done by vehicles and in effect workers using the road, quite frankly not in accordance with the conditions of consent. The question is who's going to pursue the compliance, you see?

45 **MR MARSHALL:** And just to clarify, you mentioned heavy vehicle movements, but are you meaning only heavy vehicle movements, or are you meaning all vehicle movements?

MR GIBLIN: All vehicle movements.

MR MARSHALL: Okay. All right. And my another question relates to this bigger question of cumulative impacts. And in your briefing that you have kindly provided, you go through a list of for example, cumulative impacts. But I guess I was just trying to get a sense of where the substantial problems lie within those suggested areas of cumulative impacts. I mean, we've got an accommodation camp now proposed as part of this project. I'm assuming the accommodation side of the cumulative impacts, you know, in isolation, leaving aside flow on effects. The accommodation itself is perhaps no longer one of those cumulative impacts that you'd identify. I just wonder whether you can give us a sense of where the - what the higher priority impacts that you perceive compared to others. And I think roads is probably one of those, but I'd be interested.

MR GIBLIN: Unequivocally, roads, roads and roads and also as as Roger listed all these TWAs, temporary worker accommodation camps. They will all be generating solid and liquid waste, right? And so unless they got wastewater treatment facilities, a lot of that will still be going to designated wastewater treatment plants somewhere. And solid waste, well, we've made it clear Warrumbungle doesn't have the capacity. Neither does Mid-Western. So that's all having to go to Dubbo. And in terms of potable water, there's a lot of water that's needed for all these developments in terms of concrete, etc. etc.. Massive, massive quantities of water. So that's they're going to - primarily that'll be new groundwater bores and new water licences. But I mean, you know, in the bush everything is about the state of the roads.

MS MILLIGAN: I ask a question about roads. I absolutely understand council's intent to concentrate road usage because of the wear and tear of roads, but it seems to me that there might be another side to that. So I just wanted to ask you about community views on the concentration of road uses. So it means that some routes will be designated or approved for usage and they will carry hopefully all the traffic. What does the community think about that? Because there is another view, which of course would have an impact on the conditions of roads spread throughout the shire and other LGAs, which has a huge impact on council. But it also, I suppose, distributes some of the other risks of traffic. So can you talk to us a little bit about that?

MR GIBLIN: Look, to be blunt, obviously there will be losers, people who live on some of those roads which are going to have heavily concentrated and increased traffic volumes undoubtedly. In some cases they will have dust. And they will have noise and I will have increased road safety risks. That is a cost.

MR BAILEY: Yeah, and sorry if I can just come back to the more generalised road issue. I know Warwick talks about roads, roads, roads, but - well sorry, I'm coming back to the cumulative impacts rather than the roads issue. The - there is going to be a huge impact on emergency services. So it's just not the cumulative impacts of the road network. It's going to be cumulative impacts on things like the health system, the police, the ambulance, SES and so on.

And while coming back to the worker accommodation, while there will be workers camps set up for these developments that's not to say that everyone's going to be living within those workers camps, either. There are some who are going to be wanting to come out this way and want to set up for a longer-term, and they will be
5 looking for accommodation within the towns and farm areas as well. I don't know what proportion that is, but I am expecting that there will be a certain proportion of people who will want to do that, because they'll be here for a longer term and just working very short term on projects.

10 Now in relation to Birriwa, in addition to their workers camp being set up, we're going to have EnergyCo set up two workers camps in very close proximity. The biggest one of EnergyCo's is going to be on Merotherie Road, which is going to be in the general vicinity of where Birriwa is. They're going to have a 1200 worker - well, 1200 beds worker camp set up in that area, and then another 800 beds set up not too
15 far away at Annie's Lane, I think it is. I can't remember the locality for that one, but all within a very close distance to one another. So there's going to be a huge impact on roads, emergency services with these developments occurring.

MR MARSHALL: Can I just follow up on that and just to get a sense from you of
20 whether you have enough of an idea of the programming of these various projects, because they're not all necessarily going to happen at once which feeds into the cumulative impact argument to some extent. I just wonder whether you have enough sense of the degree to which these projects are going to overlap or whether there's
25 more of a staging to some extent.

MR BAILEY: That's a moving feast. We have seen numbers as high as - peaking at 7,000 people. But it's constantly changing as the developers working on their various projects, unless Warwick - you're some (indistinct)

30 **MR GIBLIN:** Yes. Thanks, Roger. Duncan, just to shed a bit more light on that. The timing of, in effect, all these projects is totally reliant on when the EnergyCo transmission line, both the main spine - namely the 500 KV component, and then the offshoots - namely 330 KV lines, that will come off that and go to most of the projects, okay? The critical determinant is when will the EnCo transmission line not
35 only be built properly constructed, but when will it be fully energised? Now AEMO and the grid authorities, it'll be work in progress to fully energise that line so that it doesn't blow up the rest of the system, okay. It has the whole flow through the transmission network has to be carefully arranged, and planned and managed.

40 So, you know, at the moment, maybe like 2028, that line might be ready. But I can assure you that with these multi-billion dollar developments, \$3 billion or more in some cases, I think it's highly unlikely that the boards will make FID make an FID, financial investment decision, on some of those big projects, until the risk profile associated with the energisation of the line is minimal. And that is some way off. So
45 therefore, really, to answer your question, I would my reading the tea leaves. I would suggest most of these projects are going to be pushed back to the end of this decade.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks Warwick. Can I ask a question about workforce? And I heard your earlier comments about the challenges of temporary, very large, temporary workforce. But I guess the number of projects that are that we've talked about will have a residual permanent workforce. So I'm interested to hear counsel
5 sort of talk about that and whether that's something around which you are doing planning, because we noticed in your briefing the unemployment rate, the basic socioeconomic status of the shire. And so I was interested just to hear how you think about the longer term residual permanent workforce, the one would expect perhaps, would be local growth or local employment long-term.

MR GIBLIN: You Roger.

MR BAILEY: Yeah. So, I just unmuting myself. There will be a more permanent workforce. We're yet to get real solid numbers on what that's going to look like. But
15 our understanding at this point in time is it's not going to be huge. It's going to be - probably the best example is with one farm that I am aware of, where there has been a farmer who sold out to a solar farm. And we're not talking Birriwa, we're talking about one of the other ones. It's, he and his wife operate this particular farm. So, you've got one, two jobs moving out, plus contractors. And then you will have a few
20 people move in to replace that farmer and the contractors that work on that particular property. Yeah, there will be an increase. It'll be probably, I don't know, three fold, fourfold or something like that. But it's not going to be a massive amount of people coming to the area. Are we still expect that some of those will be drive in, drive out workers as, and when required on, on specialist projects.

25 So prior to being at Warrumbungle, I was at another local government area where there were power stations, and the power stations will go through regular maintenance programs. All those people who came in for the maintenance of the power stations come in from outside the local government area. So they came in for a
30 couple of weeks, did their job and then left again. So there's going to be a culmination of that sort of workforce as well as the local permanent workforce. It will require from us to have some more land and housing available. And we are doing some work around that at the moment. And one of the things I have been asking for at SteerCo through to Department of Planning is that some of their
35 processes be sped up to allow us to make changes more quickly than what the processes traditionally have allowed. So one of the examples there is the change over from community land to operational land, which is the Local Government Act issue. It is a very lengthy one. We're at the back end of one such process now. And, Leanne, what has it been four years since we started with that one at this point?

MS RYAN: Takes a while, it's a long process.

MR BAILEY: Yeah. So I think it's about four years and we still haven't reached the
45 end because the people within the department are saying that the person who handles that particular project is on leave, and there's no one else doing it, so we'll just have to wait until that person returns to complete that particular process.

MR GIBLIN: And Janett, if I may, can I make a comment about the permanent workers? I notice in the Birriwa case they're looking at saying 20 operational jobs. I think it would be worth digging into that a bit more about what does that look like? My sense is that there may not be 20 in situ, but rather you know, particularly given
5 the digitisation of the world, I suspect some of those workers will be potentially based somewhere else, but maybe. So how many actually will geographically be located, you know within proximity of the project, I guess might be an interesting question. But the other critical thing for us, okay, is about how the community can generate some benefits from all this industrial activity, quasi industrial activity. Like,
10 you know, it's a great opportunity really, surely, to educate and train some of the people, some of the youngsters, people that want to change their careers for education and training, apprenticeships.

You know, it seems to me I - we've tried, I've tried on another councils have tried as
15 part of consent conditions and planning agreements to require the developers to invest in the youth in particular with training or educational developments. But the harsh reality is it's all driven by the dollar and the teams that come in to do the work, they're usually teams that have, you know, worked on other jobs, and they just rolled from one job to the next. And it seems to me extremely problematic that people
20 really, truly do in the local area do benefit from a lot of these projects. They don't really get the opportunity that I think they should, if there was to be benefits truly accruing to the local communities. And also whether, like, who is it? EnergyCo recently, Leanne you might add on this, but EnergyCo recently put out a whole list of work jobs or contract jobs, you know, for service providers to build cattle grids or fencing or this. So the question is, I suppose, is there some sort of prioritisation of
25 local service providers to do this work, or are they coming from somewhere else?

MS RYAN: So just on that one. So recently EnergyCo released a heap of work -

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Sorry Leanne, I'm just going to interrupt you for a second, having a little bit of trouble hearing you. Can you get closer to a mic or -

MS RYAN: Yeah, I'll try. I'll raise my voice if that helps?

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. That's better. Thank you.

MS RYAN: Okay. So recently EnergyCo released a series of work packages. There was 69 in total. And I believe that's more now, I had a look yesterday, it's up in the
40 70s. But out of those there was only 4 that were open, the rest were closed. So they'd been out on exhibition on an ICN gateway website, which has not - it's not known to local people. So unless you're a big contractor and know where to look for the work, the locals aren't getting a go at that. I mean, I know this is not relating to Birriwa Solar Farm, but it's just an example of how the locals are not being given a go to even put a bid in for some of these jobs that they would be capable of doing. It
45 relates to fencing and grids and generator supplies and website design, aboriginal artwork, things like that. And I mean, we have local people that would be interested in bidding for that work, but not given the opportunity.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you, thank you, Leeanne. Okay, so Roger or Ms (indistinct) can come back to you? It sounds as though we're getting into wrap up phase. Are there any last points you wanted to leave us with? And then I'll just do a quick whip round to make sure that we've asked all our questions. Warwick?

MR GIBLIN: Thanks, Janett. I think one of the risks that has been not fully explored for the whole of the development of the REZ. If we have extreme weather and we have fierce fire storms, right, bush fires of extreme and profound nature. We have had them before in Warrumbungle Shire. I am not convinced that for the REZ, if there's 7 or 8 or 10,000 workers in and around, if there's a major catastrophe, are there emergency exit evacuation provisions in place for all these accommodation camps? How will the roads cope?

I think it would be useful to look at also what fire emergency provisions each and every one of these developers has on site. In my view, they should all have, at the very least, a tanker trailer - a fire tanker trailer that they can use. So I just, I just put that out there because I think there is a significant risk there. And similarly, given the extreme temperatures, will there be proper compliance with ceasing work during extreme fire days?

MS MILLIGAN: So your first point, Warwick, just to capture it, was about emergency planning by the proponents, particularly with a view to safety of workforce?

MR GIBLIN: Correct.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Thank you. All right.

MR BAILEY: A safety of workforce and safety to the community as well. There's - you know, the farming community is still going to be there and having these sorts of developments around will increase the likelihood of of something happening.

MS MILLIGAN: Yeah. Thank you. Okay. Suellen, do you have any residual questions not answered?

MS FITZGERALD: No. I'm good. Thanks, Janett.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Duncan?

MR MARSHALL: Fine. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. All right. So, look, I think we've got to a point where you've told us what you need us to hear, and we've asked all our questions. So can I just finish by, thank you - thanking you for making your time available and for your whole team to sort of be available to. It's afternoon. It's been very useful. Thank you very much.

MR BAILEY: Thank you. Bye bye.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

5 <**THE MEETING CONCLUDED**