

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the 2026–27 Budget Estimates

Melbourne – Monday 18 May 2026

MEMBERS

Sarah Connolly – Chair

John Pesutto – Deputy Chair

Jade Benham

Michael Galea

Mathew Hilakari

Lauren Kathage

Aiv Puglielli

Richard Riordan

Meng Heang Tak

WITNESSES

Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for the State Electricity Commission;

Kate Houghton, Secretary, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action; and

Chris Miller, Chief Executive Officer, and

Elisha Civil, Chief Financial Officer, State Electricity Commission of Victoria.

The CHAIR: I declare open this hearing of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I ask that mobile telephones please be turned to silent.

On behalf of the Parliament, the committee is conducting this Inquiry into the 2026–27 Budget Estimates. The committee's aim is to scrutinise public administration and finance to improve outcomes for the Victorian community.

I advise that all evidence taken by the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, comments repeated outside of this hearing may not be protected by this privilege.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and is broadcast live on the Parliament's website. This broadcast includes automated captioning. Members and witnesses should be aware that all microphones are live during hearings and anything you say may be picked up and captioned, even if you say it quietly.

As Chair I expect that committee members will be respectful towards our witnesses, the Victorian community joining the hearing via the live stream and other committee members.

Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of the transcript to check, and transcripts, presentations and handouts will be placed on the committee's website.

I welcome the Minister for the State Electricity Commission the Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio as well as officials from DEECA. Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement or presentation of no more than 5 minutes, after which time the committee members will ask you some questions. Your time starts now.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to move into this part of tonight's proceedings.

Visual presentation.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: If I can just take people quickly to slide 3, I want to explain how the SEC is actually helping to accelerate our transition through its work across three key pillars. These are pillars that go to the very heart of the way that the SEC operates. One, the SEC is investing in renewable electricity and storage projects that accelerate the transition and help deliver affordable, reliable renewable energy for Victorians while achieving sustainable returns. Two, it is providing Victorian households with simple and effective electrification solutions, helping them reduce their energy costs by switching to electric appliances. And the SEC is also providing the Victorian government with retail and wholesale electricity that is 100 per cent renewable.

Supporting these pillars is SEC's work to help build the actual renewable energy workforce of the future. These activities are underpinned by three guiding principles. The first is public purpose; that is about ensuring that the SEC provides broad benefits to Victorians. The second is market enablement. The SEC is focused on unlocking opportunities and increasing market investment to address system needs. And, thirdly, sustainable returns, which is about investing Victorians' money wisely to deliver sustainable returns that can be reinvested in more renewable and storage projects. These three things are what the SEC is all about and play a very unique role for Victoria in the development of our transition and getting that cheap renewable electricity coming into our state.

Slide 4 is about the progress report, and I am very delighted with the progress that the SEC has made so far. It has made significant progress across all three of the strategic pillars that I just talked about. Some of the highlights include that the SEC's investment portfolio to date will provide a combined total of more than a gigawatt of new renewable generation and storage capacity. That is significant. This includes the Melbourne

renewable energy hub in Plumpton, on the outskirts of the western suburbs. That is one of the world's biggest utility-scale batteries, which has been fully operational since November 2025. The SEC started supplying electricity to government on 1 July 2025 and is now the sixth-largest C&I retailer in Victoria, supplying around 5 per cent of our state's total energy demand.

Slide 5 goes to the success of the second pillar, and that is accelerating the energy transition. Looking now at these details of the projects that we have got, the SEC now has a portfolio of more than a gigawatt of committed projects, as I mentioned, meaning that the SEC is well on the way to delivering our target of 4.5 gigawatts of new renewable generation storage capacity by 2035. The first project of the SEC, the Melbourne renewable energy hub, is now complete and, as I mentioned, has been operational since 2025. The MREH comprises three battery components totalling 600 megawatts, producing up to 1600 megawatt hours a day, which can provide electricity for up to 200,000 Victorian homes. The SEC is also investing in the renewable energy park in Horsham. That is a 119 megawatt solar farm and 100 megawatts to our battery storage system. I will move quickly as I know time is ticking. The third really impressive project is the Delburn wind farm. That is Victoria's first publicly-owned, utility-scale wind generation project located near the Latrobe Valley, the historical home of Victoria's electricity system. Construction has now commenced of the 33-turbine wind farm, which will generate up to 205 megawatts to the electricity grid.

Slide 6 is just touching on the SEC as a retailer. I have mentioned that it is delivering power to Victorians for the first time in 30 years. It is powering approximately 5 per cent of Victoria's electricity market and retailing 100 per cent renewable electricity to the Victorian government. There is more work that is underway, including powering large schools, hospitals and police stations and working with them to reduce their energy demand and save money on their energy bills. There are a lot of good stories that the SEC has to tell on that front. And of course the renewable energy workforce is one that continues to grow as an important feature of the SEC's commitments.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The first 7 minutes is going to Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: Thanks, Deputy Chair. Minister, I first want to start with a proposition that the way you sell the SEC is like the magic pudding: it is solving all the problems. And I guess I want to get some facts on a couple of points that you have been very, very strong on now for the last three or four years. One is that the SEC will employ 59,000 people.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have never said that. No, I never said that.

Richard RIORDAN: Press release: 23 May, 7 February –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, that is wrong. That has never been said.

Richard RIORDAN: Okay. So all the press releases, and most recently in Morwell –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, you are wrong.

Richard RIORDAN: Okay. So what did you say? Do you want me to read them out to you?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, because I know you are wrong. You do not have to read out my own media releases.

Richard RIORDAN: Well, I have got them here. We can table them. What is wrong about them?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No. I can tell you very clearly that what I have said consistently in all these years is that all of our renewable energy projects, our renewable energy targets, will all deliver and drive the creation of, as you say, 59,000 jobs. But can I give you a hot tip and an update: that has actually grown now to 68,000 jobs. Okay?

Richard RIORDAN: I know. That was the point I was going to raise, Minister –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Really? What is that?

Richard RIORDAN: because in fact you came out to the people in Morwell when they asked you the same question, because –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, I did not. That is wrong. You are wrong. You are making it up.

Richard RIORDAN: your press release is obviously not only misleading to me but the people of Morwell and –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I am sorry. You are making that up.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, I am asking the question. You came out with the new 69,000 figure –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I am sorry. You are making that up.

Richard RIORDAN: I am not making it up.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: There is no media release that says that.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, let us move on.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No. You do not like the truth.

Richard RIORDAN: You have now got it at 59,000.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Have some more food. It will help you.

Richard RIORDAN: My question is: the SEC itself, on the most recent figures I can see, there are 11 people employed in Morwell and 135 all up.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: And hundreds of jobs being created through these three new renewable energy projects.

Richard RIORDAN: Yes. So, to the jobs –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes, those are jobs too.

Richard RIORDAN: the most recent ABS statistics talk about 6000 jobs in the whole renewable energy sector in Victoria. And the most favourable one I could find, which was data convoluted with Victorian government propaganda, came out at 9000 jobs. So somewhere between 6000 and 9000 is the total employment to date of your renewable energy rollout. Would you agree with that?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No. I have told you already five times, maybe six times, that you are wrong. And if you come up with your own media release, then there is nothing I can do about it.

Richard RIORDAN: No, I am asking you what the figure is now. If it is not 9000 – 9000 is the most generous I can find – what is it?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have said repeatedly and consistently that the whole of the renewable energy transition will create – originally it was 59,000 jobs over that period of time with the creation of all of these projects together collectively. Real jobs and real wages in regional –

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, we do not count jobs just by adding them every time you do something. The jobs are how many people will be employed in our economy in this industry.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, you are making up your own statistics. I have told you: we will have created 68,000 jobs by the time that renewable energy transition – well, by 2035.

Richard RIORDAN: So how many people are employed today, Minister?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have told you that.

Richard RIORDAN: No, you have not. You have not told me how many today. How many today? How many people are involved in the rollout today?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have said to you – well, I am happy to give you all of the construction jobs collectively.

Richard RIORDAN: No, just give me the figure. Surely your department is calculating it. You put it out in press releases all the time.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, that is not true.

Richard RIORDAN: What is the figure today?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: This is the problem. The problem is that you –

Richard RIORDAN: The problem is you do not know or you do not want to tell us. You do not want to tell us, Minister.

The CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: It is a little bit on the low side.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: The problem is –

The CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister. Mr Riordan, the minister has answered your question repeatedly.

Richard RIORDAN: No, she has not.

The CHAIR: If you have another question –

Richard RIORDAN: Deputy Chair, she has not told me how many people are employed in renewable energy today. She has told me how many people will be employed by 2050, not how many people are employed today.

The CHAIR: Mr Riordan, you will address me as 'Chair'. I am your Chair on this committee.

Richard RIORDAN: Yes, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Do you have a question for the minister?

Richard RIORDAN: I will do it one more time, just to see if we can get it this time. Today, not in 2050, how many people are employed in your renewable energy rollout?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have said to you consistently how many jobs will be created during the construction process of all of these projects. That is what I have said to you.

Richard RIORDAN: That is not my question. I will try it one more time. The question is: how many are employed today in the renewable energy rollout?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: As I have said to you, that is not what I have said before, and if you want a figure on that –

Richard RIORDAN: That is exactly what you have not said, I agree. You have not said it.

Michael Galea interjected.

The CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister. Mr Galea!

Richard RIORDAN: I know exactly. Mr Galea, unlike you, I have got \$14 billion worth of renewable energy projects, and the employees are there for about 2 minutes and they are gone again.

Michael Galea interjected.

The CHAIR: Mr Riordan! Mr Galea, cease the interjections.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I have got the answer.

The CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister. Mr Riordan, you have asked a question –

Richard RIORDAN: Which I did not get an answer for.

The CHAIR: You do not get to determine how the minister answers. If you do not like her answer, it is still evidence.

Richard RIORDAN: Deputy Chair, you are not the Speaker.

The CHAIR: Excuse me, I have asked you to stop disrespecting me on numerous occasions. You will address me as 'Chair', Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: I did, Chair.

The CHAIR: Excuse me?

Richard RIORDAN: I do, Chair. You are the Chair. I have asked consistently for how many people are employed, and not one person could tell us how many are employed today.

The CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr Riordan. Do not talk over the top of me. If you have not learned by now, you will address me as 'Chair' and stop disrespecting me. If you cannot remember to call me 'Chair', you can call me 'Ms Connolly'. Perhaps that will be easier for you, particularly at this time of night. Now, the minister to respond.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you very much, Chair. I can tell you that there will be more jobs in the renewable energy sector and the energy efficiency sector than the jobs that will go once these generators are gone, because these old generators are closing.

Richard RIORDAN: That is not what I asked. I did not ask that question.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, no, it is more than what it –

Richard RIORDAN: I am not interested. I want –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I know you are not interested.

Richard RIORDAN: You cannot tell me how many people are employed, so do not worry about it. Let us move on. We have got more questions.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Okay. Do you?

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, the department questionnaire on page 164 notes large-scale electricity accounts have been transferred to the SEC, and I note the contract for the SEC to supply the Department of Government Services with electricity for large sites using more than 40 megawatt hours per year – that can be viewed on the Buying for Victoria website – which would be included in these SEC accounts. This is also the subject of a brief you received in February 2025 released by FOI request. This includes government departments and offices and services such as Victoria Police, schools, transport and so on. The contract commenced on 1 July 2025 and will conclude in 2028. Is the SEC supplying electricity to DGS at a competitive market rate, or is one of the SEC –

The CHAIR: Okay, we are out of time, Mr Riordan. We are going straight to Mr Galea.

Richard RIORDAN: We will come back to that one.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: You got too hot under the collar in the other one.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, Secretary, Mr Miller. Minister, I would like to ask you about something you talked about in your presentation, which is the Melbourne renewable energy hub in Plumpton, which I understand was delivered on time and on budget as well. Minister, can you talk to me a bit more about this project and specifically how the SEC was able to achieve what it did in a way that the private sector in and of itself would not necessarily have been able to achieve?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you. The question goes to that issue of accelerating the transition, which was always very purposeful. When we announced that the SEC would return, it would play a role that would not be about displacing the market and investment decisions but rather would help to accelerate and grow the renewable energy build, if you like. The Melbourne renewable energy hub is an important case in point. What has happened here is that has been delivered on time and on budget, as you said, and the SEC's investment secured that project's delivery; it would not have been able to get off the ground without it. It enabled construction to begin immediately and one of the project's battery components to double in capacity from 2 hours to 4 hours of storage. It enabled that, which is a really important feature of why the SEC chose this project – because it was good value for money and would enable sustainable returns and accelerate that transition. The hub's construction created about 175 full-time jobs that otherwise would not have been there, including 33 roles for apprentices, trainees and cadets, and over 1200 people have contributed to the project, including more than 70 apprentices, trainees and cadets through the construction phase of the project.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister. If you can, can you quantify the impact that this project has had on Victoria's wholesale energy prices and realistically what that means for Victorian consumers?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I think the proof of the efficacy and the benefits of these types of projects, including the SEC's projects, is the last quarter in terms of wholesale electricity prices. We know that when you have got a greater reliance on firming that is from a cheaper source than other technologies, having more batteries in the system can play a stronger role in actually delivering cheaper wholesale prices. We saw that in the first quarter of this year. I would not say that the SEC on its own delivered that, but it was certainly a major contributor, because this project, this renewable energy hub, would not have been delivered without the SEC's involvement. It is a significant project, a very large project, and it continues to play a really important part in our energy security. That means of course reducing wholesale electricity prices. And we still continue to have the lowest prices in the country. Did I say that before?

Michael GALEA: Indeed. We did talk about that earlier, but it is a clear data point. It opened and was up and operational in November. The first quarter after – the results.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: It is a huge battery – 1.6 gigawatt hours of storage, and that is enough to power about 200,000 homes during the evening peak period. Again, it is cheaper firming electricity than if you had to rely on, say, electricity from gas generators.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. You spoke as well just before about the ongoing jobs as a result of the renewable energy hub. How many jobs were created in the construction of this project? I am sure this will excite Mr Riordan.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I do not know if anything excites him.

Michael GALEA: And were any apprenticeships and traineeships able to be offered as part of that as well?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: It is about 175 full-time jobs, and there were about 33 that were filled by apprentices, trainees and cadets. When you have a look at the broader project, there were about 1200 people who contributed to that project, so it is about the supply chain and other components of the development of it, and that included about 70 apprentices, trainees and cadets through the construction phase of the project.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister. What sorts of engagements took place with the local community as well in the planning stages, construction and operation of the project?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Chris Miller is sitting here beside me. The SEC has done a really good job of being a model developer. We know – and others have made comments around the table here – from the previous presentation that sometimes there are developers out there that do not do a good job, to be very polite, and others do a terrible job. The SEC has modelled itself on being a really good developer, working in with

community, ensuring that community benefits are developed that actually do present good returns to the community. And I know that with this particular project, the MREH in Plumpton, there is a community benefit fund of about \$2.5 million, I think, and that is roughly \$100,000 a year back into the community for the life of the project. Many local businesses have been engaged, including Lumea, which is completing cabling and transmission works; Symal; Kelly Electrical; Johnson & Young Cranes; and Grove facilities. They are all great local businesses playing critical roles in the construction – Grove Hire, George Rydell, just to name a few. That is in addition to that fund, so it is really just tapping into the local supply chain, making sure that the jobs from the SEC actually go to the local community, which means even more money flows back into the local community through those other jobs that are supported by those businesses. That is just to name a couple.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister. And just with the time I have left, obviously the original SEC provided a career path for so many Victorians. Is the SEC doing any engagement through projects like this one to promote careers in the energy industry to young Victorians?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes. Certainly our energy system is very different to what it was going back even just a couple of decades.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Ms Benham.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you, Chair. Going on from the wonderful preamble that Mr Riordan gave earlier, I will follow up on that question.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: It made no sense.

Jade BENHAM: The SEC and the contracts with DGS – I just want to know, is the SEC supplying electricity to DGS at a competitive market rate, or is it to the detriment of DGS?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, it is certainly not to the detriment, and certainly the terms are very competitive. The details of the pricing information are commercial-in-confidence, and you would get that from any commercial entity that is providing a retail contract to anyone who is a consumer of electricity, and the SEC is no different. The SEC negotiated the terms and price of its retail contracts with government over many months, and I can say to you that the terms are very competitive.

Jade BENHAM: They are 20 per cent above what the market rate is, though, aren't they?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: According to whom?

Jade BENHAM: If they went to the market, in a competitive market, they could get those rates per kilowatt hour at a 20 per cent cheaper rate.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, how do you know that?

Jade BENHAM: Because there have been FOI reports in February 2025 released by FOI request. It includes government departments and offices, services such as VicPol, schools, offices, services such as transport and water corporations, and that contract that Mr Riordan mentioned before that started on 1 July last year and will conclude 30 June 2028 – 20 per cent over the cheapest rate they could get in the marketplace.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, I do not know what documents you are referring to, but I will say to you clearly that the SEC has been working with the consumers, if you like, of the energy contracts, and I can say to you that the SEC has been successful.

Richard Riordan interjected.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Can I finish? Let me finish my answer, please.

Richard RIORDAN: You blanked out, but you left enough –

The CHAIR: Excuse me. The minister is asking you to be respectful, in case you could not understand the plain English that she was asking. The minister is to continue.

Richard RIORDAN: She couldn't remember.

The CHAIR: Excuse me.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I did not say that at all. I said I do not have what you have got in front of you. So let me tell you the SEC has been successful in lowering network charges for 10 schools, for example, exploring opportunities to assist more schools, and has been very successful in saving schools between \$10,000 and \$75,000 per annum each. That is a total of more than \$230,000. That is what the SEC are delivering through their contracts, and –

Jade BENHAM: The contract that we got we acquired through FOI. The contract that I have here, acquired through FOI, between the SEC and DGS – relevant details of the contract have been redacted, as you can see here, on the basis of commercial-in-confidence. Can you tell the committee why that would be? Why would it need to be redacted if, as you say, it is readily available by those processes?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: My question to you is about this 20 per cent figure you pulled out of the air when you do not know what the commercial-in-confidence arrangements are. Those matters are commercial in confidence. They are as every retailer behaves in a market, and I can tell you that there is a very good deal there.

Jade BENHAM: So it is not 20 per cent over the market rate?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, you came up with that figure, not me. What I say to you is that these are commercial-in-confidence arrangements, and the value is there for government agencies that have got a contract with the SEC.

Jade BENHAM: Great. Thank you, Minister.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: And as we know, renewable electricity is the cheapest electricity that you can build.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you. I want to move on to the renewable energy park at Horsham now. This is budget paper 4 of the budget papers, obviously, page 149. There is a discrepancy. The Horsham renewable energy park is \$363.925 million, yet on the SEC's website it is stated that it is \$370 million. That is a discrepancy. It does not look like much on paper, but it is just over \$6 million – \$6.075 million in fact – between the SEC's reported capital expenditure when comparing figures on the SEC website and fact sheet with Treasury's 2026–27 budget paper. So which is correct, the SEC's or the Treasury's reporting? Which is correct?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: The advice that I have got from Chris Miller, the CEO, is that that additional amount is a representation of contingency in that figure.

Jade BENHAM: Why would that not be clear, though? You could see how it would be misleading to have different figures in the budget paper and the website.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, I am explaining it to you. That is the point of me appearing here today, to be really clear and have opportunities for questions to go to these very matters. The answer to that – and I am happy for Chris Miller to supplement it – is that there is a contingency that has been placed there by DTF. Is that correct, Chris? Do you want to add to that?

Chris MILLER: I am happy to elaborate. Thanks, Ms Benham, for the question. The \$370 million figure that you referred to is a conservative estimate of the cost of the project. As you have disclosed, the figure that appears on the SEC website is \$363 million, and the difference between those two figures is essentially a conservative contingency amount. The project is tracking to budget, so it is tracking to that \$363 million figure.

Jade BENHAM: So the contingency would be for what, for example?

Chris MILLER: Any potential pressures on the project budget. But at this point in time the project is tracking to budget.

Jade BENHAM: Okay.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: To that figure on the SEC website. Is that right?

Chris MILLER: Correct.

Jade BENHAM: For public-facing reporting, though, and I know this is budget estimates and we are getting to the bottom of it, as I said before, do you think it is acceptable to have a \$6 million difference between Treasury's budget papers and the SEC website, which is public facing?

Chris MILLER: Ms Benham, I think the point here is that Treasury, in their budget reporting, take a particular view and apply a particular methodology for how they report costs and estimated investments. I have outlined to the committee today the basis on which that \$370 million figure was calculated. It includes some additional conservative contingency, which is not being required. The project is tracking to the budget of \$363 million.

Jade BENHAM: And on time to be delivered as well?

Chris MILLER: Yes, it is.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. Moving on to a different matter now – this is the questionnaire, page 164. Minister, the department questionnaire states that all large DEECA electricity accounts transferred to the SEC are now purchasing zero-emission electricity. Before this transfer of accounts to the SEC took place, did the department undertake a cost-benefit analysis assessing the value for money, comparing the SEC against other market offers?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: What I will say to you is that the contracts that the SEC has with government agencies are all about value for money. They are competitive, and the processes of determining competitive pricing are a commission-in-confidence matter.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Ms Kathage.

Lauren KATHAGE: Thank you very much. On the SEC, I might throw back to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Ms Kathage. I just want to ask you one more thing, Minister. It is actually about the Delburn wind farm in Gippsland, which you talked about in your presentation. You did say that this is already underway, I believe, as the SEC's third project. Could you please talk to me a little bit more about this and what makes it so significant?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you. The Delburn wind farm is one of those projects that when it was not an asset of the SEC was not able to reach a financial investment decision and be built. It is a really worthwhile project. It is a very significant project. It is obviously a wind farm that is Victoria's first publicly owned utility-scale wind generation project, which is significant in itself – the SEC owns that – and it is the SEC's first wind farm project. I had the pleasure of attending the site of the Delburn wind farm about two weeks ago now, I think, with Chris, together with some apprentices and trainees, cadets, and some young engineers. They were so excited to be there, working near to home on a project that was about a clean energy future. That is what they see themselves doing – working in that sector. The construction commenced in March. It is going to be a fairly big wind farm – 33 turbines – generating or having a capacity of about 205 megawatts and enough to power about 130,000 homes. That will be operational in 2028. This project, together with a lot of other projects that are in the pipeline and under construction in Victoria, is a real testament to our state being open for business when it comes to investors coming in and building these projects. They are needed. They will be providing that important cheap replacement electricity as the existing older generators reach their end of life and close down. It was really terrific to see this wind farm come to being.

We are also going to be relying on a highly skilled workforce with decades of energy generation expertise. We know that that is in the Latrobe Valley, and there is a lot of pride in the valley because of that. Now, whilst the energy system looks very, very different to what it has over the decades – it is looking different everywhere

around the globe – I am really pleased that the SEC is actually bringing these types of jobs, matching them up with the skills that are available there in that community and the local supply chain, to really reinterpret and reposition the Latrobe Valley towards a new future in a different type of energy supply. I think that is a good thing for locals.

Michael GALEA: Indeed, Minister, you earlier commented on the fact that the previous government had effectively outlawed new wind turbine construction.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, there was no energy project that received planning approval in the four years of the previous government – not one. It ground to a halt.

Michael GALEA: I actually did know that, and I had actually forgotten that in past years, because we are in such a different situation now and seeing that complete reversal and turnaround.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: They think it is funny to run out of electricity.

Michael GALEA: Some might think it is funny, but I think having Victorian jobs is a good thing, and making our own energy that is sustainable is a good thing too.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I think so. Exactly.

Michael GALEA: We spoke before about the renewable energy hub in Plumpton and how that can be driving down power prices. Indeed, as we saw before, 32 per cent of the state's power in the last 24 hours has come from wind energy of some sort. How do projects like Delburn help to also reduce that pressure on Victorians' energy bills?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, what is important is that we have a diversity of electricity generation coming into our system. A state that just builds out on solar or just builds out on wind is not going the smart way to get an energy system that is reliable and affordable. That is really critical. Wind plays a really important role, and having wind projects built in different parts of the state will make sure that not only are we getting the solar during particular times of the day and wind at particular parts of the day if they are built over in the north-west of the state, but if they are built also in the east you are starting to get wind coming in at different times of the day. That is really critical, and Delburn wind fits into that category absolutely. Because it is the cheapest form of replacement electricity you can build globally, anywhere, it means that it will continue to put that downward pressure on Victoria's wholesale electricity prices. That means lower bills for Victorians, and that is what we aim to deliver. We have got a very sophisticated approach to this. No-one has got the number of plans that we do in terms of how we are going to do this transition and do it well. That is why wind is going to be an important part of this. But if what you do is not build that wind and you close it down, you are just not going to have the electricity when it is needed, where it is needed, and what you are going to do there is push up everybody's electricity prices – and that means manufacturers and households. I think that is probably the short and the end of it.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister. You did touch on the importance of this project being in Latrobe Valley as well. Can you talk to me about the amount of jobs you expect to be created over the life of this project, how many there are currently and again, as I asked before, apprenticeships and traineeships as well?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes, sure. Thank you. When I visited at the end of last month, I think there were just over 40 people onsite who were working, and that included some of the apprentices and trainees. My understanding is that the project will create about 300 jobs, and most of those jobs, if not all of them, are going to be close to where people live. It is going to be their project, near their homes. I mean –

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

The CHAIR: We are going to Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: Thank you, Chair. Minister, just a couple of other things. Can you tell us whether the process that is in place – and I imagine it is probably the SEC overseeing it. On the scale that we are building wind farms, things are going to go wrong, so that is not government's fault; things happen, right. In terms of the

very noticeable collapse of a wind turbine about this time last year and, just a bit before that, the fire at Portland, the fire at Portland uncovered the fact that some of our wind turbine infrastructure does not have fire suppression in it. I was wondering if that has been resolved.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Is this the SEC or –

Richard RIORDAN: Well, you are selling the renewable energy.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: What are you talking about? I do not know. It is not an SEC – you should have asked that in the previous presentation.

The CHAIR: Mr Riordan –

Richard RIORDAN: So that is an issue that you are not interested in, Minister?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, absolutely. I –

Richard RIORDAN: Well, you might not mind then –

The CHAIR: Mr Riordan, I am sure you have another question lined up.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: If I can, Chair, I am happy to relate it –

Richard RIORDAN: But we are talking about the Delburn wind farm, so I am sure we can talk –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I am happy to relate safety issues to the SEC projects if that helps.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Saved by the minister, Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: Oh, thank you.

The CHAIR: Minister to proceed.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Exactly. He just missed the call earlier. We have a very clear commitment to safety around the construction and the operations of the Delburn wind farm. Certainly through the planning process what was required was a bushfire mitigation and management plan. That is in place, and that plan is developed and regularly reviewed in consultation with the CFA. The CFA has already signed off on that bushfire mitigation management plan and the emergency management plan. Now, you talked about fires and other operational things –

Richard RIORDAN: So we have we got fire suppression?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes. What will be happening in terms of fire prevention measures at Delburn: once all the turbines are erected, there will be six fire detection cameras mounted on the project's three meteorological masts that will allow any smoke detections to be triangulated and provide precise GPS coordinates to emergency services to support a fast and coordinated response. Other fire mitigation measures include built-in fire detection and suppression.

Richard RIORDAN: That is not fire suppression.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, I am just getting to that now. Other fire mitigation measures include built-in fire detection and suppression systems in each of the 33 wind turbines, underground electrical cables with just 100 metres of above-ground connection to the existing transmission lines, vegetation clearing around the terminal station and a minimum 50-metre vegetation-free area around the base of each turbine. Each turbine will be equipped with a lightning protection system and new water supplies with five multiplied by 130,000-litre water tanks, in addition to the many existing HVP water supplies in the plantation.

Richard RIORDAN: So the ones that do not have it – are they getting retrofitted?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, all of these 33 will have a built-in fire detection and suppression system.

Richard RIORDAN: So will the thousands around the state all have it as well?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Well, Energy Safe Victoria, which is the regulator for energy safety of all of the projects – and if you want to talk about non-SEC projects, I am happy to do that too. But in October –

Richard RIORDAN: There are only 33 turbines to talk about with that, so it is not particularly –

The CHAIR: Mr Riordan.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: You could have asked it last session. Up to you, Chair, but I am happy to go there.

The CHAIR: Go ahead, Minister.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you. In October 2024 Energy Safe Victoria set about requesting information from all wind farm operators about the nature of fire suppression technology. The full results of this request are currently being assessed. Energy Safe is providing guidance to all wind farm operators in Victoria around the maintenance and preventative measures to decrease the risk of fires occurring in the first instance, backed by stronger powers under the energy safety Act 2025. On the request of Energy Safe Victoria, our government moved quickly to improve the legislation around energy safety, giving Energy Safe Victoria greater powers to be able to require improvements and better behaviours, if you like, from the operators of these renewable energy projects, whether they are solar or whether they are wind.

Richard RIORDAN: It is a work in progress, Minister.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: No, no. Those reforms are there and Energy Safe Victoria has conducted a significant audit on the ground based on risk assessment, and they have done a very thorough job. They have also advised that onshore wind turbines currently under construction in Golden Plains, Hawkesdale and Ryans Corner will have fire suppression systems installed. So Energy Safe Victoria is actually not only going around doing auditing but requiring improvements in terms of the systems for fire suppression in these energy technologies.

Richard RIORDAN: Okay. Thank you for that. Back to the topic we were talking about before, about the supply of energy to DGS, presumably your department did a cost-benefit analysis between all the offers?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: What I have said to you is that the SEC had negotiations with the relevant procurement agencies, because for contracts across government you do not necessarily have a separate contract for every government department or place. There are contracts that are managed across departments. Those contracts were negotiated very strongly and the best prices were delivered, and the value for money is there for governments.

Richard RIORDAN: Is that analysis available to this committee?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: That is commercial-in-confidence, as you would have with any government procurement agency contracting services from any energy retailer. Those are commercial-in-confidence.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, what proportion is zero emission electricity, because 100 per cent zero electricity purchased by the SEC is ordinary market electricity matched with renewable certificates? So what mix have you got?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I will ask Chris to answer that.

Chris MILLER: Mr Riordan, we operate like every other renewable retailer in that we support our customers to acquit their commitments – in the case of the Victorian government, commitments to purchase 100 per cent renewable – so 100 per cent is the percentage. The way that that is acquitted and audited is by ensuring that there is, for every megawatt hour consumed by our customers, one megawatt hour's worth of large-scale generation certificates surrendered to the regulator.

Richard RIORDAN: So in terms of the purchase, every megawatt that you are purchasing is actually generated; it is not just in certificates and offsets?

The CHAIR: Thank you. We are going to Mr Tak.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Chair. Minister, just further on from Mr Galea's question and to your presentation, construction is already underway on the SEC's second project, the renewable energy park in Horsham?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes.

Meng Heang TAK: Could you please tell us more about the significance of the project, including how this investment compares to what the private market could have delivered in Horsham?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you for your question. This project was picked up by the SEC in November 2024, and at the time it was Australia's first 100 per cent government-owned renewables project – probably still is, I think, but it certainly was at the time – and it was pretty good that the SEC was doing it. Now, that park is a hybrid, so it has a solar farm and it has a battery storage system, and that makes it one of Australia's first integrated solar and battery projects with a single connection point. Why that is important – a single connection point; I think you call it 'behind the meter' normally – is because it means that the SEC has full control over the generation, so what it produces and how it is stored, without it necessarily having to go into the grid and then come back. It means that you can actually have greater flexibility in and around the cost of it and the pricing of it when you do send it off into the market. That is on track. It is going to be operating next year. It will be generating quite a significant amount, about 242,000 megawatt hours of renewable electricity a year. That is equivalent to five times the number of households in Horsham, just as an indicator. The park is being built in two stages. It starts with the solar facility, comprising 212,000 solar PV panels and a total capacity of 119 megawatts, and then of course the 2-hour battery storage system comes into play, so that gives you a sense of the scale of the project.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Minister. I also note that you shared that the project will create some 246 jobs there. So how many people has the project actually already employed, and what opportunities is it providing to apprentices and trainees?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Now, in terms of how many jobs it has already created, yes, it would be about 246 jobs, including apprentices, trainees and cadets, and it will create additional ongoing jobs during operations and maintenance. In terms of how many jobs it has already created, I might defer to you, Chris, if there is a running tally. No, sorry, I do have that figure. Two hundred people have already worked on the construction of this project – close to home, good jobs, wages back in the community where they ought to be. Alternative policies would have these projects grind to a halt and billions of dollars in wages lost to local regional communities, which some people say they care about. \$3.9 billion in wages in regional economies – that is what would be lost by alternative policies.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you. With the remaining time, Minister, can you tell us a little bit more about the additions to these local jobs, like you said? What are the benefits that the project will provide to the Horsham community, and how has the SEC been engaged with the local community about the projects?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: As an exemplar, if you like, as a developer, the SEC always prioritises procurement from local businesses – that is one of its hallmarks – where possible. There are some things of course that you cannot source locally, like a massive transformer. They are only made in certain parts of the state and indeed in other states. But key project components have also been manufactured or sourced across Victoria. For example, there are 30,000 Australian steel poles that are in the project's transformer, also being built by Wilson Transformer. In the assembly of the solar farms, 36 power control units have been done in Wodonga. Then of course you have got great local businesses who have worked on the project, including Wimmera Bolts & Fasteners. They supplied a significant amount of fixing and other items. WimVic Services provide hygienic pumping supplies for the toilets. Hip Pocket Workwear & Safety supplied 100 per cent of the uniforms for all PSC site employees and a major amount of safety gear for the project. Middy's Electrical wholesaler supplied much of the electrical components for construction – that is the local Middy's – and Unyte supplied quarry materials and assisted in civil works. And then of course there are landscaping, security services, electrical and plumbing works. You can see how vital these projects are to helping a local economy: just to have money coming in, then going down to the butcher shop, buying your meat, going to the grocery shop, doing the things that really help a community thrive. This is what is happening; that is what the SEC is delivering.

Mathew HILAKARI: Mr Riordan was talking about the billions invested in his community, which I reckon he would be absolutely thrilled about.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: He should be.

Mathew HILAKARI: Those sorts of investments are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build the infrastructure that we need across the state. Now, you did not mention the amount of chocolate milk drunk by the tradies working onsite or the amount of coffees, which I do not think we have got that assessed by the department, have we?

Members interjecting.

Mathew HILAKARI: Thank you, Mr Riordan. Appreciate that so much – your contribution chirping from the end.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Hilakari. Mr Puglielli.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good evening. In the slides – just to make sure I saw it correctly – it said 5 per cent of the state's total energy demand is serviced by the SEC. Is that right?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes, that is right.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: I saw that correctly. Do we have a figure as to what that will increase to when Delburn wind farm is completed?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I am not sure if we have got that figure to hand, but I will look over my shoulder – no. We will try to come back to you with that if that is possible.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Yes, that would be great.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: But effectively, if you think about the government's own consumption of electricity, it equates to about 5 per cent. Because the SEC covers all of that, that is why you have got that 5 per cent, so it is quite significant. But obviously that is the start. Our aim and our commitment is to get to 4.5 gigawatts of renewable generation and storage by 2035. We have already got over a gigawatt, so we are about a quarter of the way there already.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. You did have a figure, I think, for the Delburn wind farm of how much wattage it is adding. What was that figure?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes. Delburn – let me have a look.

Chris MILLER: 205 is the capacity.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: 205 megawatt capacity.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: And then however many megawatts it produces over the year is expressed in megawatt hours.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you. In terms of that first question that I had around the 5 per cent total demand figure, what was the total state demand that was used for that calculation? In terms of wattage, what is that scale?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Okay. Maybe I can answer it in a different way. When we made the commitment to create about 4.5 gigawatts, I think that equalled about 20 – was it 20 per cent? Sorry. Okay. So the total electricity consumption – that is for the Victorian government – is 2.6 terawatt hours per annum. There are two contracts with government. They account for about 80 per cent of the total government electricity consumption, which is 2.2 terawatt hours per annum of load. The remaining are made up of little entities that have separate

little contracts, and there is a different licensing requirement around that, which we are looking to sort through so that there may be an opportunity for the SEC to also provide those smaller rats and mice, if you like, with electricity.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: On that question, though, in terms of overall energy demand for the state, not just government, how much power supply are we talking? How much is that – the total?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: The Victorian government demand is 5 per cent, so you just multiply that by 20 and that gives you the total electricity consumption in the state, if that makes sense. Is that all right?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. We are doing some quick maths here. That is all good.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: So it is 2.6 terawatt hours – is that right? – multiplied by 20.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you. I will move on to the retailing elements of the SEC, and we have covered it a little bit, just so I have understood correctly. The SEC charges schools and hospitals for electricity it provides – yes?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes. There are two procurement contracts. Chris, you will jump in and correct me if I have got this a bit wrong. This is just how government has procured electricity over the years. So there is one that is a health one and then there is basically everyone else. Is that right? Roughly. But the bills are paid by each of the schools for their electricity, for example.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Yes. And those particular arrangements, as I think we have covered, are commercial-in-confidence. That is correct?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Are you able to tell us how much revenue has come in or is collected from schools and hospitals from those arrangements overall – say for the recent reporting period?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: You will not be surprised when I say that it will be reported in the annual report –

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: by the SEC. It has got to go through that process.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: We can look out for it there. What are some of the factors that inform –

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Sorry, I will just make sure I am not misleading you.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Please do. Thank you.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I think that is where this gets reported.

Chris MILLER: That is correct, yes.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is correct. Okay. What are some of the factors that inform those arrangements with any individual school or hospital or consumer of energy that is retailed by the commission?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Just remembering that a retail contract is not negotiated with every school or every police station, because the government procurement is two contracts. One is the whole health system and then the other one is everyone else, including schools. But the bills of course are paid by an individual school or what have you. That is the only way I can really answer that. However, I know that the SEC has already done a lot of work to really look after the interests of the consumers, the schools, where they have found significant savings, just by changing some of the – I think I will throw it to you on this one. Some of those schools are actually pocketing some significant savings on their bills. You will not get that from any other retailer. You will get that from the SEC. And that is money that is going back into the school, and they spend it on supporting kids who need it, all of those things. Perhaps, Chris, you can go to a few of those examples.

Chris MILLER: Thanks, Minister. If I can just take a step back and explain how the contracting works, Mr Puglielli: as the minister said, the schools buy through a bulk purchasing arrangement. Their agent for that purchasing is the Department of Government Services, who buy on behalf of a whole range of large sites, including schools. So, if you like, the terms and the basic pricing are common across that cohort, but the SEC has its own customer operations team that work very closely with individual metered accounts, if that makes sense. There are about 4500 individual metered accounts. What we will do, with the aid of some of the technologies we have got, is look at where there might be opportunities to save our customers money. In the case of schools, there was a very obvious opportunity to work with the school and the local network service provider to reduce their network tariffs. Essentially, there were a number of schools that were on incorrect or oversized network tariffs. The SEC worked quite directly with those schools and the DNSP or TNSP to get those schools onto a correct network tariff, and that has resulted in some pretty significant savings for schools – in some cases up to \$75,000 per annum for a school.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: How many schools have been impacted in that way under those types of settings where that correction was required?

Chris MILLER: I will try and dig up the details. My recollection is that we have assisted about 10 schools so far, and we will continue to look across the account to see whether there are others that are being charged incorrectly. But it probably leads nicely into –

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Miller. We are going to go to Mr Hilakari.

Mathew HILAKARI: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, officials, for this evening. Minister, I refer to your presentation, particularly relating to how the SEC is now powering government services with 100 per cent renewable electricity – we confirmed that in the last series of questions. But I was particularly interested that it is now up to 5 per cent in terms of Victoria's total energy load, which is really significant. How does the SEC rank as a commercial retailer in this state? But also, I know the Member for Laverton is always keen to talk about renewable electricity and the SEC. How does that fit into it?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you. I think I am correct to say that the SEC ranks as one of the bigger C and I electricity retailers in Victoria, which is pretty good, and it means that it can go a long way to using that market influence, if you like, to really drive improvements and benefits for the entities. In terms of the performance of the SEC as a retailer, what they do is typically send bills monthly, and they have exceeded the performance targets for that. Ninety-nine per cent of bills are currently sent on business day one of the month, with the remainder by day two or three. This is market leading. Bill accuracy is well over 99 per cent. That gives you an indicator of what the SEC strives to do in so many different ways and across the pillars. Also, the SEC has set up an engineering and product development energy solutions business that is currently working with Victorian government customers to identify opportunities for behind-the-meter investments to help lower energy bills and build resilience. Again, this is what you do not get from another retailer out there. So when people ask if this is competitive pricing or value for money, I can tell you the work that the SEC is doing is actually driving significant bill improvements. We have already got some runs on the board, and we will continue to develop up offerings for many of the consumers across the 4000 sites that are now powered by the SEC.

Mathew HILAKARI: Are there any other benefits of the government buying from the SEC? You have explained a little bit about some of the differences, but are there other differences compared to a private retailer? Otherwise I am keen to hear about schools, because one of the things is that every school is pretty keen to save dollars where they can. You cannot run a school without the lights on. You want to make sure that the heating is ready to go and it is a great learning environment for our young people. The SEC's retailing to government: how does it benefit all Victorians? Will it then also go on to affect the household bills of every Victorian, not just that 5 per cent into the market?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Yes. Absolutely. Perhaps if I can ask Chris to probably add to that by way of some examples.

Mathew HILAKARI: Yes. Thank you.

Chris MILLER: Thanks for the question, Mr Hilakari. Yes, the SEC brings a lot of benefits to its customers, and one of the key reasons for that is that there is very strong alignment between the SEC, being a government-owned entity, and our customers, all of whom are government owned and operated. So unlike, I

guess, the incentives set that exists for private retailers, our incentive is to work with our customers quite actively to lower their energy costs and in some cases reduce their energy consumption from the grid. I have talked about the –

Mathew HILAKARI: It is almost a reverse incentive from most commercial retailers. They want you to spend more on electricity, increase the amount of electricity, whereas they are doing a job to decrease that and protect the whole market.

Chris MILLER: Yes. Well, there is an interesting set of incentives for private retailers, particularly those who have got large thermal books. There are often not strong commercial reasons to want to partner with their customers to get some of that load off the grid and behind the meter, because it actually does eat into or cannibalise the legacy business. SEC, because it is new and is retailing renewable energy, does not have that same, I guess, cross-incentive to do the work it is doing.

Some of the other interesting examples of what we have been doing with our customers, in addition to the work to save schools on their network tariffs, have been in working with a number of customers on what we call demand response. We trialled this with five of the water corporations late last year, and what we essentially have done is work with those customers to incentivise them to shift their demand from peak periods of the day to lower priced periods of the day. And then what we do is share the benefits of that. There are significant wholesale benefits to us. We share those benefits 50–50 with those customers. That trial ran over six to eight weeks, and we have now expanded that product offering to all of our government customers, who will benefit if they can work with us actively to shift their demand away from those peak periods of the day.

Mathew HILAKARI: Have you got some of the initial findings of that – obviously to roll it out further – that you could speak to?

Chris MILLER: We will actually be in coming –

Mathew HILAKARI: Or am I getting in too early on this?

Chris MILLER: It is very timely, Mr Hilakari, because we will be in the coming months publishing a best practice guide for government corporations, which could actually be used by any significant energy consumer, on how to go about demand response and participate in those programs.

Mathew HILAKARI: Is there an attempt also for the SEC to go to the commercial sector in terms of selling electricity? Is that something, Minister, over time that we foresee?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Absolutely. And Chris, you can go to that. I know that has been a keen focus also of the SEC.

Chris MILLER: It goes to the SEC really trying to fill those gaps in the market. At the moment there is certainly a gap, particularly for what I would call the mid-tier or the mid-cap non-government or private commercial industrial customers who are looking for longer term contracts, often with strong decarbonisation objectives – so they are looking for 100 per cent renewable products. But given so many uncertainties globally at the moment around supply chain, what is missing in the market is retailers who are prepared to offer longer term contracts above the standard two or three years and who are keen to work with customers to better align their demand quite actively with the profile of supply in the market. We are seeing an increasing penetration of renewables in the market and storage.

Mathew HILAKARI: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. Minister and officials, thank you for appearing before the committee tonight. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing, and responses are required within five working days of the committee's request.

The committee will take a short break before beginning its consideration of the climate action portfolio at 8 pm. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Witnesses withdrew.