TRANSCRIPT

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the approvals process for renewable energy projects

Ararat — 24 August 2009

Members

Ms J. Duncan  Mr J. Pandazopoulos
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Executive Officer: Ms C. Williams
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Witnesses

Mr B. Rogerson,
Mr J. Pollard,
Mrs R. Pollard,
Mr A. Lyon,
Mrs H. Lyon,
Mr B. Keen, and
Ms H. Barker, Grampians-Glenthompson Landscape Guardians Inc.
The CHAIR — I welcome Bill Rogerson, John and Robin Pollard, Adrian and Helen Lyon, Bruce Keen and Heather Barker from the Grampians-Glenthompson Landscape Guardians Incorporated. We thank you very much for coming to see us today and for the extra information you have provided.

As part of the formal process I remind you that all evidence taken today at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as per the Constitution Act 1975 and is further subject to the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003. In effect that gives you parliamentary privilege but only in here. Any comments you make outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege.

Again I remind you, although I know you have been here for most of the hearing, that obviously the information today is being recorded, so speak clearly so the recording devices capture everything. Within a couple of weeks you will receive transcripts of the comments you have made and of our session with instructions on what to do. I understand that Mr Rogerson is starting the presentation?

Mr ROGERSON — Yes. There are two apologies: Judy Vanrenen and Sandy Rogerson are unable to be here today. Good afternoon. My name is Bill Rogerson and I am here on behalf of the Grampians-Glenthompson Landscape Guardians Incorporated. Quoting from the 2003 renewable energy policy statement, the Victorian government is committed to facilitating the development of a sustainable, secure and affordable energy supply for Victorians. The goal is to drive economic, social and environmental prosperity for the state developing wind energy resources in a way that appropriately balances environmental, economic and social factors. But in reality the wind energy approvals process completely betrays the above pledge as stated in the government policy.

Environmental prosperity is jeopardised. Environmental studies of visual and surrounding area amenities, aircraft safety and flora and fauna are matters to be considered. However, since developers employ consultants, the process is non-transparent with results slanted towards the findings they want — like distorted photomontages and wire frames. There is a need for an independent fund with trustees to manage these investigations.

The approvals process requires greenhouse benefits to be calculated. In the Oaklands Hill application at Glenthompson the wind farm electricity generation equates to ‘reducing carbon emissions equivalent to planting 543 000 trees’. The project covers 2323 hectares of freehold farmland. Since one tree requires 2.25 square metres of growth space, 543 000 trees could be planted on approximately 140 hectares. Thus 140 hectares would aesthetically do the equivalent job of reducing carbon emissions compared to the destruction this project will do to valuable agricultural land. Furthermore, wind turbines have a life span of only 20 to 25 years, whereas indigenous eucalypts will last for hundreds of years.

The approval process overrides local government planning policy. For example, the policy objective of the Southern Grampians Shire concerning visual amenity states:

To ensure that use and development of land is sensitive to the surrounding landscape and does not lessen the existing appearance and amenity of the area —

and —

Development on ridge lines and peaks in significant landscapes … discouraged.

However:

Thirty … turbines and associated access tracks and reticulation lines are proposed to be located along the east–west ridgeline.

Site selection within the process fails to comprehend the extent of salinity and erosion and the ultimate ramifications of a wind farm project on rural land. For over 30 years the site of the Oaklands Hill wind farm proposal has been guided by Landcare and sustainable farming projects to treat existing degradation. Salinity is the result of bygone years of extensive land clearing on hilltops called the recharge area. The Oaklands Hill wind farm site is proposed on hilltops but the extensive road and construction works typical of a wind farm will ultimately destroy surrounding farmland through salinity of the discharge area below.

The panel, however, did:

acknowledge the susceptibility of the Oaklands Hill project site to erosion during the construction phase of the project in particular.
The problem is clearly identified by the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority on the attached map, but this did not deter approval of a permit, even when there was doubt these very erodable hillsides could be stabilised. Of concern is the likelihood of head water erosion, and if it does occur, it is extremely difficult to control.

Further, the approval process has no respect for rural water systems. The turbines and tracks of the proposed Oaklands Hill project site will be sited across headlands which drain into either the Hopkins River, or the Wannon and Glenelg rivers. The Hopkins River is already recognised as having the highest median salinity levels of any regional river. The further predicted increase of 2205 EC will carry serious consequences. It is difficult to understand how a body such as the GHCMA did not object to the proposal when they are clearly aware of such fragility.

The approval process operates with the net-gain principle in the matter of native vegetation and habitat. It is said losses associated with wind energy infrastructure should be more than offset by commensurate gains through revegetation. The problem is, as stated by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, that much of Victoria’s native vegetation has already been lost and that which remains is critical for maintaining catchment and landscape health, and protecting habitats of threatened flora and fauna. Under the pretence of net gain, the approval process condones the destruction of indigenous plants that have taken thousands of years to adapt as part of the entire ecosystem of an area.

Surrounding area amenity of the process includes the evaluation of noise-demanding compliance with the New Zealand standard of acoustics. Why is an international standard employed when a Victorian version is available? Nonetheless, the methodology of measuring sound from wind turbine generators is seriously faulty when, as revealed by A Current Affair on 14 August 2009, the noise levels inside a non-stakeholder house at the Waubra wind farm exceed 70 decibels. There is total ignorance by the process to major health warnings related to noise, for more than two years ago Dr David Iser of South Gippsland, stated wind farms cause adverse health effects from low frequency noise. Thus, further investigation into noise is required including ultrasound levels for both humans and animals too.

The process allows for inadequacies in the assessment of flora and fauna prior to any application. For example, the brolga is a threatened taxon under the Victorian FFG act with any loss, a major event requiring major action. The proposed Oaklands Hill wind farm is in a direct line between two flocking sites, Willaura and Penshurst. With inadequate assessment prior to application, the applicant has indicated acceptance of a permit condition requiring an Avifauna Management Plan which would include procedures for detecting and reporting bird strikes; a two-year monitoring program; and an adaptive strategy to mitigate or offset impacts. It is a bit late after the facility is built if it is revealed the brolga is at threat.

Finally, wind energy guidelines are totally remiss to the fire risk. The Country Fire Authority acknowledges that fire risk occurs in and around wind farms from fire in a nacelle —

Mrs FYFFE — Excuse me, can I just stop you a moment: what is a nacelle?

Mr KEEN — That's the big —

Mr ROGERSON — Yeah, where it holds all the generator.

Mr KEEN — The gearbox and everything —

Mr ROGERSON — The fire risk in a nacelle, wildfire, spill of oil from a nacelle and substation incidents. Given Victoria’s recent catastrophic events of 7 February, it is irresponsible that the approval has been given to the Oaklands Hill wind farm project which under the rating and relative risk to people from bush fires within Australia, is in an area considered extreme risk. The process threatens economic prosperity.

Whilst government has excluded national parks within the approval process to protect the significant landscapes and environmental values embodied in these areas, areas closely adjacent are not privy to the same attention. The Oaklands Hill proposal is only 16 kilometres from the Grampians National Park. The approval process does not care that the high visibility of this project will toll heavily on the current lucrative tourism market for the Southern Grampians region.
In fact land adjacent to wind farms suffers severely through devaluation. In December 2007, the Victorian energy spokesman for The Nationals, Peter Hall, stated that there is an irrefutable proof of property devaluation. He went on to say, ‘The state’s planning guidelines blithely ignore the impact wind turbines have on the value of neighbouring properties’. The 2008 Stock and Land article ‘Land values blown apart’ reports that wind farms are impacting on property values with rural-residential land values near turbines falling 38 to 40 per cent.

Agriculture and the food industry is a vital component of the Australian economy. It accounts for 46 per cent of all retailing turnover in Australia and is a reliable long-term supplier to global markets. Yet the value of agricultural land is completely omitted from the approval process for renewable energy projects. With Victorian, Australian and world populations growing, and much agricultural land once deemed the food bowl, like the Murray-Darling region, now suffering due to a lack of water, remaining arable land will be the most critical for food production, rather than the 1700 wind turbines currently earmarked for Victoria.

Wind farms require a high-voltage grid infrastructure. The approval process does not account for deficiencies. For example, the closest suitable transmission point of connection for the proposed Oaklands Hill wind farm is at the Terang terminal, and that will require some 17.5 kilometres of costly powerline to be installed to meet the Terang–Hamilton line.

The approval process chooses to ignore the inefficiencies of wind power. Overseas data shows that wind turbines produce on average less than 20 per cent of their theoretical, or rated capacity. In 2007, prominent economist Terry McCrann stated that wind turbines are an inefficient waste of taxpayers’ money.

On 4 August 2009, an independent analysis conducted by weather analyst Andrew Miskelly and physicist Tom Quirk has confirmed the total uselessness of wind power and deems both the federal and all state governments guilty of betrayal of their most fundamental duty to the public interest. Spain once led the world in using wind power as its primary source of electricity, now the process has almost wrecked the Spanish economy. Sadly the Victorian government does not heed the warnings and continues to approve these facilities.

Social outcomes are well scarred. The current process involves a series of secret agreements to entice landowner participation. Neighbours are not consulted, rather they find out through rumour and surmise. The outcome is irreparable, social damage arising within local communities.

Bribery by investors to support wind farm proposals is rife. For example: the proponents of the Oaklands Hill wind farm proposal, Investec Bank (Australia) Limited, promised the tiny town of Glenthompson a donation of $50 000 but only if they secured a permit. Whilst the permit was granted, the donation has never been honoured.

The Minister for Planning and his department obviously do not care about rural constituents. They choose to ignore panel advice, dismissing recommendations to relocate or remove turbines, and overlook the fragmented, inadequate and incomplete application, as delivered by proponents. Furthermore, to be told by panel members and chairs that we in the country must make sacrifices to ensure there is power for the city, creates a sour divide between the two.

In closing, we would like to reveal the sorrow and frustration felt when local government and local arms of institutional agencies which affect Victorian primary industries such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment; the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority; the Southern Grampians Shire, and the Country Fire Authority seem to be totally brain washed by the wind energy approval process. These bodies who are meant to give advice and work towards preserving our environment and the natural resource base, refuse to be involved, turn their backs, offer us no assistance; in fact an unethical behavioural response in our fight to protect the Glenthompson area. Instead, a handful of local farmers under the banner of the Grampians-Glenthompson Landscape Guardians Incorporated show real caring for this land, and a determination to try and save it for future generations to come. Thank you.
process for the community to have a say, obviously. What were your experiences with the Oaklands Hill planning process?

Mr KEEN — Yes. I have put together a package there. It includes a letter, which I will just go through, but I will outline briefly what we found. We were told first of all at a hearing before the actual panel started that the panel was here to expedite wind farms for the government — as much as to say, ‘Well, go home’. At the hearing it further came out — —

The CHAIR — So you were told in what way? Did they write to you?

Mr KEEN — No, verbally. And in that meeting their solicitors stood up and said, ‘Look, Madam Chair, we would like to amend the project and say we could put aviation safety lights on it’. That became an issue. It was never clear in a permit; they were not asked to resubmit the permit. That effect carried on right throughout the panel hearing, and I have a record of comments here about the frustration and the fragmentation of the panel as it took.

In other words, instead of having a permit that covered the fauna, the power supply and the aviation lights, the aviation lights part was taken out and put at the back end; the community was not informed at the proponent’s opening day; another one, which was again directed by the minister, that could not go to VCAT has just concluded — it happened only two weeks ago; and we have a third one due, which is still not going.

What the panel told the proponent at the hearing and the fragmentation of the panel is just not right. Once the permit has been approved the council really has so much pressure on it that it cannot stop approving the others. That is documented here in this package; I have provided extracts and the lot.

As we progressed, airport lighting came up as an issue because we kept bringing it up, so much so that I wrote a letter to the minister, asking him to say once and for all whether he would take responsibility for saying whether or not this farm had to have lights.

The CHAIR — Is that your appendix A?

Mr KEEN — That is my appendix A. That letter never got to the minister. Somehow the panel got it, brought it back to the panel hearing and read it out to everybody at the panel. But that letter highlights the issue with the lights.

Right on the last day of that panel hearing, which was held in Dunkeld, we were then told the next hearing to deal with the lighting, which was going to be a special one, would be in Melbourne, again in the middle of December. On the last day of that hearing, as is recorded on page 4 in that package — it is here, and the chairlady referred to it; I must find it and just read it out to you — their specialist for the lighting admitted:

… throughout the panel proceeding by some objectors, Mr Keen in particular, that the applicant had intended to install aviation obstacle lighting all along but had not publicly disclosed it earlier in order to minimise opposition.

It was indeed later indicated by Mr Slingo during cross-examination that he had been requested by the applicant to prepare a lighting plan for the proposed wind farm even before the pre-hearing community consultation phase of the project.

They knew they had to do it. They decided not to take it to the community. I marked the difference when you were talking here about Challicum Hills, how everybody was very grateful for the effort that went into explaining things and being transparent and up-front with everybody.

In the business I am in I go to a lot of meetings. All I can say is there was a lack of transparency in this panel hearing, and the manipulation of the panel hearing was absolutely disgusting. If you read through here, you will see the panel almost agreed. So why did the panel not say, ‘Go back and start again’? All we get is that the permit was granted. Those quotes are out of the panel reports, and I believe there is quite strong comment, from the panel, for example, that ‘Such piecemeal applications are likely to place planning authorities or review forums in somewhat of a dilemma’. I believe that in the panel hearing the proponent was trying to manipulate or push things through — which is far different from the situation in Challicum — instead of being up-front. They have either struck problems or they want a bet each way; they just try to manipulate the whole show.
Unfortunately for them we hung in at the panel, the whole lot of us. They could do it. It was in their hands. If they wanted to speed things up and fix it, honesty and integrity and making sure that we had a fair deal would help.

The CHAIR — Does anyone else want to talk about their experience at the panel?

Ms LYON — We scrutinised the referral document as soon as it became available to us. Under the landscaping soil section 14 — I am sorry, I have only one copy, but I will submit it — under ‘Soils’ it asks the question, ‘Is there a potential for effects on land stability, acid sulphate soils or highly erodable soils?’ The applicant has put ‘No’.

We wrote straight away to give them all the information about the south of Glenthompson extensive Bushy Creek Landcare works. The forerunner of it was the Potter Farmland Project to help with the serious degradation in the area. We supplied all of this information right in at the early stages, and still it proceeded to the panel hearing stage. The serious erosion aspects of it have been acknowledged. So we do not have much faith in even the pre-panel phase.

The CHAIR — Can the committee have a copy of that document? I do not mean at the moment, but so long as you present it later on — because it was not attached with your submission, I understand.

Ms LYON — No. It is a broad one we have done, but I can submit that.

We also addressed the water environment. As a group we presented under salinity, water quality and erosion. Even the tour would highlight the serious problems that exist south of Glenthompson. If the committee would do a Google search of ‘Glenthompson salinity erosion and water quality’, it would be surprised at all the information that would come up. It is a well known and well-documented area, yet approval has been given, with some supposed safeguards to stop erosion and to control it.

John is more of an expert on erosion and concerns about it. We have followed the extent of the process right from the pre-panel hearing stage, sought to have input at every stage and tried to have matters clarified. You are all very welcome to come and have a look at the site. You need only to drive down the Caramut road from Glenthompson to see the washaways from the road structures.

The CHAIR — I read that in John’s one-page document. Did you want to add something to that, John?

Mr POLLARD — I cannot compete with Bill; he has covered just about everything, I think. Anyway, this is just my personal experience of things.

At the panel hearing at Dunkeld in 2007 we were at a disadvantage from the start. They had their lawyer and so-called experts. We only had our experience and common sense.

Secrecy is a real problem. The participants had already signed before we were even aware that there was going to be a wind farm on our boundaries.

Local authorities such as the CMA were cut short. In my case, I had put in a submission regarding soil erosion which I know will be a major concern. A CMA employee from Hamilton said he was worried about the run-off from the roads and all the culverts that would be required. This fellow was helping develop a wind farm in Ireland and was well experienced. But it was immediately dismissed as irrelevant. You only have to drive along the Caramut road, as Helen just mentioned, adjacent to the proposed wind farm site to see many culverts and the canyons as a result. And on the erosion map of Victoria it is marked as one of the worst areas.

I worked for the Soil Conservation Authority in 1953, and then I managed a property adjacent to the proposed wind farm site for 45 years. Controlling erosion was an ongoing job. Landcare groups were established with the aid of money from Telstra. As a result all the creeks and gullies on that property are now fenced off and trees planted. The property to the east was also treated the same way through the potter farm plan many years ago. The two properties are now owned by the one owner, totalling nearly 8000 acres. The property just to the north of the wind farm site is also a potter farm plan site. as is another one on the south-east corner.

It is of great concern to us that this wind farm will be situated in such a fragile environment. Considering all the work done by Landcare and the Potter farm plan to stabilise the country, it is a tragedy.
Mrs FYFFE — Adrian or Helen, you raise a number of concerns about how the noise was measured during the Oakland Hills wind farm development. Can you explain what you mean by that?

Mr LYON — I am glad that you realise that we put in a submission. On the examples that we have been going through, noise is one that I looked at. Quite obviously the way you measure something can dictate the sort of measurements you get. I do not know whether you can explain to me what it really means if you are given a decibel reading and it has dBA L95 on it, because it is going to mean a different number from something that might not have that A weighting on it and it could have the L5 or L10 per cent on it. We hear of these problems with wind farms and they are dismissed, but you have to take a variety of readings before you can ascertain exactly what noises and what sort of problem you have.

Mrs FYFFE — When they were taking these measurements, were they taking into account any background noises at any different times?

Mr LYON — They are the measurements they took. Now I understand your question there. They took background readings at our house. The New Zealand standards not only ask for night and day comparisons but also suggest wind direction. This would indicate variations that would occur that could give you an idea on whether there are thermal currents that cut down the air. They refused to do that, so they did not comply with the New Zealand standards. Have you ever seen the New Zealand standards?

Mrs FYFFE — No, I have not.

Mr LYON — That is another thing. They are not publicly available. You have to purchase them from the New Zealand standards association. I have a copy that supposedly is on loan — —

Mrs FYFFE — By that, I gather you mean that the New Zealand standards are far more stringent than our standards?

Mr LYON — No. They are far less stringent and in my opinion they have been designed to not measure the type of problems that you will get from turbines.

Mrs FYFFE — So many of the wind farms overseas seem to be closer to populations than we are having. Is it because perhaps there is more background noise; they are not hearing them the same?

Mr LYON — That could be, but much of the information that I have seen — for example, the van den Berg effect and those papers — has been drawn up overseas where people have concluded that there are problems. It is also quite evident that the bigger the turbine is, the more likely it is to create a problem. Here at Challicum Hills, which is the place where I have been going and measuring the sound and concluding that their way of ascertaining it is flawed, they have only 30 or 35-metre blades. We are going to get 50-metre blades or maybe larger, which is like another site that has just received some publicity. The same expert gave information — —

Mrs FYFFE — If there are 30-metre blades, how high is the wind turbine?

Mr LYON — Ours were going to have a tower of 80 metres and the blades, and there are three of them, are 50 metres, so they reach 130 metres into the air. They produce, we are told, probably 2 megawatts of power. You can compare that to your D11 bulldozer, which is a pretty noisy sort of thing and is only hundreds of kilowatts. So you have high transmission and you have this blade, which in fact is the size of a train travelling sideways at 200 kilometres an hour. If you meet a truck when you are travelling a road in a small car, do you hear any noise?

Mrs FYFFE — Not until long after you have passed.

Mr LYON — You hear a ‘woo-oo’, don’t you? That is what the van den Berg effect is. Overseas I do not believe they are free of problems. I think they have had some very severe problems. Toora has only small turbines. I have not managed to get down there, but we have received quite a bit of information from there, too. When you look at the way they want to measure the sound and what went on at the hearing, I went to not wanting turbines.

I think that is something that you need to know, that Helen and I were offered turbines, and that is in the submission that I gave to you, and we decided not, primarily because they were going to have restrictions on
trees. During the process, when you start looking at details, I came to the conclusion that noise could well be a problem and they were trying to work it out and present things in a way that would mean that you were not assessing what the problem was.

Ms BARKER — Also to that, there were two other members of our group who were offered turbines and refused them, Judy and Peter Vanrenan and Ted Mann, as well as Helen and Adrian. I think that is significant. That means that they were not jealous neighbours.

Mrs FYFFE — It was implied that there were jealous neighbours.

Mrs LYON — You got that before, that it was not sour grapes.

Ms BARKER — The fellow said before that we are objecting only because we are jealous neighbours. That is not the case because three of our members have refused them. My little bit on the back page is that it is our belief that detailed, transparent and independent studies should be carried out on a proposed site before it is considered for the development of a wind farm.

Challicum Hills was obviously a favourable site, whereas our site is not and we do not believe that proper studies were carried out. In our case, an independent person — not a person associated with the proponent or the government, even — would have done due diligence and checked the application in detail. There were quite a few things left out in the application that should have been included, so that the person deciding would have all those details to decide on and say, ‘Look, all things considered, this site is not suitable’. Bill has covered very well all the things that were not considered in the process.

I thought the points should have included that they should have inspected the site and spoken to people familiar with the area. They did not come and talk to us, and we are neighbours and we know the land. We know how erodable it is, the salinity issues and issues like that. It was all secretive and we did not know until I received a package in the mail, saying, ‘This is the wind farm going ahead’ — and I am just across the road.

They should have requested studies of the three waterways which are going to be severely adversely affected, which Bill covered. They should have requested information and studies of the salinity and erosion issues. This was all overlooked in the application. It did not come out. Only we brought it out at the panel hearing.

They should have requested that studies be carried out in detail of the flora and fauna, not in drought times. It should be noted that BOCA and Birds Australia and the field naturalists of Hamilton all put in objections to the wind farm. I spoke to one of them after I found that they had put in objections and they said, ‘We don’t normally get involved in wind farms but we felt that this wind farm really did warrant having this objection put in’. For them to be involved is fairly significant, I think. The brolga is of great concern to the people.

The noise and noise health impacts should have been researched more. They should have requested calculation records of the wind farm efficiency. That is very important and should be transparent, because we believe that all this degradation of the land and the landscape is happening — and for what? We believe that they are not efficient and they are not going to do the good that they are claiming.

Tourism is going to be affected. The route of the powerline should have been clearly defined and power connection addressed. The native vegetation removal should have been addressed. They should have checked the heritage trail of Major Thomas Mitchell, which is located through the wind farm. CASA safety lighting issues should have been made transparent to the community. All that should have been done before the hearing. We feel that the process was all fragmented. It was just not right. Anyway, these are some of the significant issues which were overlooked or omitted. We are sure that, had these issues been addressed by an unbiased person, the site would not have been recommended for the development and the panel hearing would not have taken place.

This would have saved the developer a lot of money and time and it would also stop the community division that causes so much stress and anxiety. Wind farms should be located only in areas where they do not have so much adverse impact on the landscape and the environment. That is what I think, that they need to look at the siting of these wind farms so that they are not going to affect so many people if they have to go ahead.
The CHAIR — We will take a final comment from Helen. We might wind up. We had half an hour allocated and we have gone for about 40 minutes.

Mrs LYON — I will defer to Adrian.

Mr LYON — You might not realise, but Helen and I had been through a EES hearing process before this was a full EES. Yes, Mr Ingram, this time we did not get an EES. With experience, for my part in the Oakland Hills I did not consider it a court, which some started as. It is put there to make decisions or recommendations to a minister, as we are told. While we found that it is more there to try to support government policy. In other words, we were being told.

In the process you have to look at the use of expert witnesses. There needs to be some sort of incentive for them to endeavour to give accurate and meaningful information because what is happening is a proponent, who probably is not going to operate the site, is paying somebody to give favourable information. There is not balance to that. You just pick somebody — maybe they have a bit of paper — and they receive payment if they give favourable information. Whether it is done under oath or anything, it is just some sort of incentive, so that the information is accurate. That is what I thought was most important to get through to you.

Ms BARKER — It should be an independent person for the studies.

The CHAIR — Bill?

Mr ROGERSON — I would like to ask: does the panel know who actually pays for the transmission line from the actual site to the main transmission line?

The CHAIR — We are considering comments.

Mr ROGERSON — I am just wanting to know.

Mr INGRAM — There has been a fair amount of evidence on that.

The CHAIR — There is a whole lot on that. It can vary, depending on where the particular site is, but most often it is the applicant.

Mr LYON — If you want information on our hearing, we did get audio recordings of it. Some of them are not so good. There are a lot details. I give them to anybody who would like to have them because, as you can hear, we did not think we were treated very fairly and we like to publicise that. Okay, we were not a professional group, but we were polite as we went through this hearing. I have three copies, if you want them.

The CHAIR — We will accept them. We will accept whatever you think is additional useful information.

Mr POLLARD — We were told at the hearing in May that Investec were going to develop the site and we asked them specifically, ‘Are you going to develop the site?’ and they said yes and it was immediately being sold on to AGL, so they are difficult to deal with. It makes it difficult.

The CHAIR — We thank you very much for your comments today, your written submissions, Adrian and Helen, and the additional submissions you have made today. You will receive, as I said, within the next couple of weeks a copy of the transcript with instructions on what to do with it. We want you to notify us if there are any slight alterations based on meaning, but there is a technical detail thing on that. So get back to us on that. We thank you very much for presenting today.

Witnesses withdrew.