

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Closure of the Hazelwood and Yallourn Power Stations

Traralgon—Thursday, 3 March 2022

MEMBERS

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Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

Ms Harriet Shing

Ms Kaushaliya Vaghela

Ms Sheena Watt

WITNESSES

Mr Christo van Niekerk, General Manager, Loy Yang,

Mr Steve Rieniets, Group General Manager, Operations, AGL Loy Yang.

The CHAIR: The Economy and Infrastructure Committee public hearing for the Inquiry into the Closure of the Hazelwood and Yallourn Power Stations continues.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I wish to welcome members of the public that are in the gallery today.

My name is Enver Erdogan, I am the Chair of the committee and I would like to introduce my fellow committee members Mr Rod Barton and Ms Melina Bath.

To witnesses appearing at today's hearing, all evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the constitution and the Legislative Council standing orders, which means you are protected from defamation law for any comments you make at the hearing, but with any comments you make outside the hearing you may not be protected. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript, but ultimately transcripts will be made public and put on the committee website.

We welcome your opening presentation but hope that it stays to about 10 minutes maximum to allow plenty of time for discussion. On that note if you could state your full name and the organisation you are representing today for the Hansard record that would be appreciated, and then you can start your presentation. Over to you.

Mr RIENIETS: Okay. Steve Rieniets, Group General Manager of Operations for AGL—a lifelong Latrobe Valley resident, 38 years in the industry, mainly in Latrobe Valley, so I know a bit about this place.

Mr van NIEKERK: Right. I am Christo van Niekerk. I am the General Manager for Loy Yang since last year in August. It has been seven months and has been a great experience so far.

The CHAIR: Excellent. Thank you.

Mr RIENIETS: So I would just like to pay our respects to the land on which we meet here today of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai clan and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging—and to Uncle Lloyd Hood and to Uncle Wayne Thorpe in particular.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Would you like to make an opening statement or presentation?

Mr RIENIETS: Yes. So we have a brief presentation which we will go through and then we are happy to take any questions.

The CHAIR: Excellent.

Visual presentation.

Mr RIENIETS: I think the slide is running behind us. So the first slide—next slide, thanks—is just a little bit about AGL. A 180-year-old company, the second oldest company in Australia behind Westpac—the largest generator of electricity in the country: 11 000 megawatts installed, both thermal and renewable, operating in four states; 42 terawatt hours produced; and 20 per cent of the national electricity market, so a big player in the energy sector. We also are a retail business—4.5 million customers—and the biggest private investor in renewables in the country, with 2.7 gigawatt hours of renewables. So thermal and renewables, and everything in between, we operate.

The CHAIR: And a very large presence in Victoria.

Mr RIENIETS: Correct. Large power stations in Victoria and New South Wales—obviously Loy Yang here in the Latrobe Valley. And I will hand over to Christo to take us through Loy Yang.

Mr van NIEKERK: Right. If we go to the slides—so a bit of history. And I will take it as read. So you know I can spend obviously lots of time taking you through this, but you can see it: from commissioning in the 80s running through to corporatisation, privatisation, and then AGL taking over in 2013, and then obviously as we move toward demerger, which is currently planned to happen by the end of June this year. And you can see obviously we are a big player in Victoria, generating about 30 per cent of the total electricity consumption.

Go to the next slide. Talking about the transition, I mean, everybody I am sure is aware of the fact that we are planning to demerge the company at the end of June, and particularly in terms of our climate commitments you can see what AGL Australia's commitments are in terms of where they are going to end up. Obviously we are going to end up with all the coal-fired power generation. So in terms of our revised climate commitments that we have recently communicated during the half-year results, just to take note in terms of closure times, they have been brought slightly forward. You can see Liddell is on target to close next year in April, so that is progressing. You can see Bayswater, New South Wales, is now targeted in a window of 2030 to 2033, brought forward from 2035. And for ourselves, the original shutdown date was 2048. That is now also brought forward into a period of 2040 to 2045. You can see some of the other information around that.

Go to the next slide. The question obviously is what do we leave behind after 2040 to 2045, once it is closed? We started talking about the footprint that we have got and developing these industrial energy hubs around those footprints. We have got quite large real estate. We have got interconnectivity into the electricity grid, water supply et cetera, et cetera. So we are pretty keen to develop this concept of the industrial energy hub. Just some of the things that have already started: you can see that we have got approval to progress our grid-scale battery, so we have started with the final process around getting that business case approval and starting installation, so that is progressing. The hydrogen—I understand you had J-Power here yesterday, so you have had a full discussion around that, and we are obviously quite keen to support that in terms of commercialisation of that process of hydrogen production. Then in terms of the transition, including going forward, we are members of the LCC Transition Task Force. We have had a meeting and we committed to work closely with local government and also state and national government in terms of how we progress this going forward.

Go to the next slide. I think this is pretty important for us in terms of rehabilitation. It is about getting that surety moving forward. What is that final landform going to look like, and how does that inform our rehabilitation planning, because we started with progressive rehabilitation about six or seven years ago, around about 2013–14. Our rehabilitation is based on a final lake landform, so obviously water allocation becomes pretty critical for us. Just to give you a bit of a view of the size of the mine, you can actually take the Melbourne CBD and you can actually superimpose it on that, just to give you some feeling of the size of what we are looking at. Depth is about 210 metres, and then just the sheer size of the work.

Go to the next slide. In terms of the rehabilitation, it is really about leaving behind that safe, stable and sustainable landform. That is really what we are looking for. As I said, our planning has always been to have it in a pit lake, so obviously the water allocation becomes quite critical for us. You can read through some of the themes et cetera. As indicated, we are working closely with state and local government around what that looks like. We have started those engagements, but as I said, again we are pretty keen to get confirmation and some surety, because, as you can imagine, that decision around what the final landform looks like is quite critical, also in terms of our own business going forward to plan around it. Apart from the progressive rehabilitation, as we continue with the mine we need to, in terms of the life of the whole of mine plan, consider what that final rehabilitation would look like in terms of how we even progress the mining process.

Go to the next slide. Risk of non-water rehabilitation: you are aware of this. That is why again, just from a stability perspective, if it is a dry void, you have got issues around land movement, instability of the area et cetera, and a water solution will give you that stable landform. You know, again with a dry void you will have to have a continuous management process around managing that dry void. You have got artesian, you have got groundwater seeping in, you have got all kinds of other things that go with that and, as I said, also you have got movement of land or ground around the mining, so you would like to keep that stable, and you can see some of the results of not doing that.

Go to the next slide. Some information on the workforce: you know, we have been part of the worker transition scheme with the closure of Hazelwood. You know, we have provided ex-Hazelwood employees opportunity to also apply for and be employed by Loy Yang. We have 49 people that have actually joined our organisation through that process, and we are still very much committed going forward, you know, working with the LVA and local government et cetera to progress that, so we are quite keen to keep those engagements going through our corporate stakeholder management.

Go to the next slide. Right, so we are a member of the Victorian Skills Authority, and we are also supporting our employees through that process, so skilling them up. We have done some work with the LVA around also acknowledging skill sets and micro-credentials, so we have done some work around that. We have also taken some key learnings, you know, we have got a bit of work happening in the Hunter with the closure of Liddell, so we are also taking a leaf out of their book, and as we progress also obviously the Bayswater closure 2030 to 2033 we are also going to learn from the experience.

Go to the next slide. Local economic impact of the business, we have been involved with enterprise development. We are also supporting local business. We have invested \$160 million into the local economy through our relationship with over 160 Gippsland service providers and suppliers, and at a state level, over \$300 million, 650 suppliers. The nature of our business is such that we use a lot of external services and suppliers in terms of equipment and spares et cetera, so it is quite a significant impact on the local economy. And, as I said, also in terms of enterprise development we have done some work around that.

Go to the next slide. Right, in terms of community engagement, as a member of the community one of the priorities that we set for ourselves as a business is that community engagement. We have got the community dialogue group, where we engage local community members, interest group representation et cetera on a quarterly basis. I have attended two of those sessions. It is quite interactive, you know, quite tough questions sometimes being asked, particularly around the environmental impact, and what is also interesting is there are quite a few questions around jobs and what the future holds. So we will keep on doing that, and we believe it is pretty important that we keep the community also close, because at the end of the day whatever the landform or whatever we leave behind obviously that is going to be owned by the community, and they need to be comfortable with what that is. You can see some of the other initiatives that we have been involved with.

Go to the next slide. Right, that is it.

The CHAIR: Excellent, Christo, and I really appreciate you speeding through those slides, because I think it is very informative, but some of the stuff—obviously we are very aware of AGL, the largest, there is a footprint that Steve explained earlier as well. So it is not a company that we are not familiar with in terms of the broad public work you do and important work you do. I did find interesting your explanation about the impact of a dry void, because obviously that deals with how we use another scarce resource, water, and the lasting impact there, and obviously AGL did take part in the, I would say, Australia-leading worker transition scheme when Hazelwood closed. And that is fantastic news that you were able to redeploy 49 workers from that plant into your operations, and another issue also that my colleague, Mr Barton, always touches on and that I appreciate being in the slides is about the local suppliers, the supply chain, and we saw this when the vehicle industry closed down in Victoria. In parts of Melbourne the supply chain impact of that was significant, so I think the presentation was very informative about some of the other issues that may impact the local area when the plant closes. Now it has been brought forward to potentially 2040, so I am not sure what the commonwealth government will be saying about that, but I will leave that for a bit later.

On that note, I might pass over to Ms Bath. I know she is eager to ask a few questions, and then we will go to Mr Barton, and then I will have the final questions.

Ms BATH: Thank you very much, gentlemen. Again, thank you for giving up your time in a very busy week to come and speak to this inquiry. Yesterday we had the new CEO of the Latrobe Valley Authority here, and it is my understanding that he said that we would be out of coal by 2032. Now, I would like you to hopefully dispel that, the reason being security of supply and reliability.

Mr van NIEKERK: I think security and reliable supply is critical. As Loy Yang, we currently are earmarked to be the last station that will be closed down, and our primary role is really to provide that secure supply up to the point where we can physically close down Loy Yang and there is sufficient capacity to make

up for that. In terms of coal availability there is more than sufficient coal, so I do not think that coal supply availability is an issue. I think there is even potential with future industrial development—that is, the HESC et cetera—to also be able to supply them with coal for their processes. It is critical in terms of our mining and how we develop the mine in terms of the different blocks. As I said, it is quite critical also to understand the final landform specifically on rehabilitation and what that mining will look like, but I can assure you that from just the volume of coal still available that is more than sufficient to provide for our requirement to provide that sustainable or secure electricity supply until closure so that obviously whatever replaces us gets developed to do that.

Ms BATH: Okay. Thank you.

Mr RIENIETS: I think, like it or not, 70 per cent of the state's power is still from coal. Now, an orderly transition—I think 2032, in my opinion, is too soon to have that orderly transition. They will become jeopardised, the three key areas, as we decarbonise: affordability, sustainability and the most important, security of supply. I think that will trump affordability if we have periods where supply is compromised.

Ms BATH: Brownouts or blackouts or the like.

Mr RIENIETS: Correct.

Ms BATH: So that is to be avoided at all costs.

Mr RIENIETS: Correct.

Ms BATH: AGL is demerging, and you have got your renewable element and then your coal generation. What do we as an upper house committee need to know to tell government about the key, I guess, indicators that this change is happening successfully, and what are the flags if it is not happening successfully? I guess I mean that in terms of that supply. And then we can talk about workers separately.

Mr RIENIETS: Yes. So as indicated in our slide, AGL's planned demerger is to form two companies. Accel Energy will hold all of the thermal assets, so Loy Yang, Bayswater, Liddell and Torrens in South Australia. We will still be the largest generator in the country—so 31 terawatt hours of energy from that company. So the scale will still be there, and I think on the ground we will not see much difference. We will see a change of logo perhaps, but I do not think there will be much change on the ground in supporting our workers and our communities and operating our plants safely and reliably.

Ms BATH: Thank you. In terms of hydrogen, we had Mr Stone from J-Power in yesterday, who gave a really good presentation. That is a pilot program.

Mr RIENIETS: Correct.

Ms BATH: Does AGL have the capabilities and is it ready if that became a going economic driver on a large scale? Is that something that AGL could facilitate?

Mr van NIEKERK: I think we can. I do not want to say I think we can; we can. So obviously we will be the coal supplier to whatever commercialised venture gets set up. We have already got some indication as to what volumes of coal will be required as well from our HESC partners, so we have got a good feel for that, and we are confident that they are in a position to be able to support that. The nature of what that support is going to look like, we have not started that discussion, because we have obviously supported the pilot plant, so we have had that relationship. But the discussions around once there is commercialisation of the process—we still have to start that engagement. So we are obviously quite keen for that to progress. We are looking also forward to seeing what comes out of that process.

Ms BATH: Thank you. If I can indulge, I taught a maths student at Mirboo North high school who has become an engineer working for AGL who I met at the shovel opening of the HESC project. I think that sort of story is one that we need to hear over and over again. Within AGL and the transition to other energy sources—and if we look at HESC in commercialisation—is that something that you are planning on with your workforce, if we could drill down into that? And what avenues are you planning that through, and what do you need to know from government or industry about those sorts of transitions?

Mr RIENIETS: So I will touch on the engineering one first. He must be a good person if he is an engineer. AGL have an engineering graduate program, right—so that high-level training of graduates coming into the industry. And it was a different industry when I started 38 years ago, so we recognise that the industry is different and we train our people accordingly. The second part of your question was?

Ms BATH: Well, in relation to how there is going to need to be a transition from your workers' current status to new industries, whether it be on site at AGL or other, whether it be hydrogen or other, and what work you are doing now and what you need government to talk to you about.

Mr RIENIETS: Yes. Energy hubs using that Loy Yang footprint—huge footprint—real estate, as Christo touched on before, with generation infrastructure: so repurposing that site and creating industry hubs on that site is our plan and vision, not just at Loy Yang. In four weeks time the first unit at Liddell closes; 12 months later Liddell is closed. We are planning energy hubs in the Hunter. So we will learn a lot from that and how that may apply at Loy Yang. So that is our plan. You know, it is not about shutting down the sites, it is about repurposing the sites, our vision.

Mr van NIEKERK: And I think as you do that obviously you look at your skill set. We are most probably going to be the last qualified power generator, so there is not going to be a like for like in terms of, you know, the type of industry that we are in. But, I mean, the industries that we foresee that are going to be established are going to be a high-tech, industrial, big factory type of set-up, so I think there are definite skill sets that are common between a power station and, for instance, a commercialised hydrogen generation project.

Ms BATH: And on the Hunter and Liddell, are you seeing anecdotally or are you are doing those assessments on where staff will move to—so where current employees will move to and what sorts of industries? I mean, we talk about learnings—it is a good football term often too—but what are you doing now that will help this region?

Mr RIENIETS: I think with the closure of Liddell power station, obviously some of the workforce will retire, and those that are not retiring we will move across to our Bayswater station in the Hunter. We have got the advantage of owning two stations up there, so when one shuts we transfer the others to retrain them where required and use them on our Bayswater station.

Ms BATH: We will not have that advantage here, though, will we? And the same for Alinta.

Mr RIENIETS: I mean, here it is a bit like musical chairs, right? There are going to be less chairs in the game, right? So we need to get more chairs into that circle, right, and those chairs will not be power stations. It needs to be other industries putting their chairs into that circle so everyone gets a chair, right? I think that is the name of the game here.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Bath. Mr Barton.

Mr BARTON: Thank you, Chair. Just in terms of renewables, could you let the committee know what you are doing now and what your plans are as we move towards 2040, 2045? I am assuming you want to be an energy supplier, and I am hoping you want to produce a 30 per cent market share like what you are doing now. So can you tell us how that is all going to fall into place?

Mr RIENIETS: Yes. AGL is investing in renewables across its portfolio. Here at Loy Yang, to be specific, we have a permit to proceed with a battery on our site. So that is here and now; we are proceeding with that. But I mentioned the energy hubs before; there are other things we are exploring for that site going forward.

Mr BARTON: So have you got plans to stay producing energy at the levels you are producing now to supply Victoria?

Mr van NIEKERK: I think it is probably difficult to commit to saying that. We would always like to be a big player in the energy market for sure. In terms of where we are going to go to, what that looks like, obviously renewables definitely are in our future. We have got quite a bit of renewables in the pipeline under development—wind in particular—so we are going to progress that. It might not all be on site at Loy Yang, because I think, you know, because of the nature, you would like to really attract different types of industries that could potentially also utilise the coal resource. So for that we could be quite keen. But I think as Accel

there is a definite view of staying involved in the energy generation part, obviously as Accel, going forward. You know, that also will be important for us.

Mr RIENIETS: I think the other issue is the network—poles and wires. Unfortunately, you know, where thermal sites are built is where all the infrastructure is. Often they are not good sites for, you know, renewable assets: wind, solar or hydro. So if you need to build more renewable assets, you need to make sure the network can support that.

The CHAIR: You raised a good point that you produce 30 per cent of the state's energy.

Mr RIENIETS: Well, it is a bit more than that. That is AGL's, but that Loy Yang mine supplies AGL plus Alinta as well—

The CHAIR: Alinta as well.

Mr RIENIETS: next to Loy Yang B. So that mine actually provides 50 per cent of the state's power.

The CHAIR: Fifty, wow.

Mr RIENIETS: Yes.

Mr BARTON: Wow.

The CHAIR: That is a large figure. I mean, it is a good question because some of the debate around this issue is: does the shift away from coal mean higher prices for energy? Do you have a view on that?

Mr RIENIETS: I think if it is done disorderly it will do. I started with the three key things: affordability, sustainability and security of supply. If it is done in a disorderly fashion, we will see those three key pillars compromised.

The CHAIR: No, thanks for sharing that. AGL also has gas. Do you have any gas-fired power plants?

Mr RIENIETS: Yes.

The CHAIR: And gas energy in Victoria?

Mr RIENIETS: In South Australia.

The CHAIR: In South Australia, that is right. Is gas a viable transition fuel towards renewables?

Mr RIENIETS: Depending on the price of gas and how you are structured to purchase that gas.

The CHAIR: Yes. I just have a broad question about reliability and dispatchable capacity, because there is a lot of debate about the need for, I guess, AGL here to stay open till at least the time frame that has been given, because it is providing the dispatchable capacity. What needs to be done to ensure that the renewable dispatchable capacity is in place by then from a policy setting?

Mr RIENIETS: Well, I think it is certainty. Certainty over everything that impacts our business is key there.

The CHAIR: I was going to ask about the worker transition scheme, because you have already been partnered with the LVA on that. How is that partnership? Did you find it productive and helpful or was it a difficult process? What are your learnings from that experience?

Mr RIENIETS: I was directly involved with it, setting it up. I think at the time it was a win-win. We had some very skilled Hazelwood ex-employees who could fit into our organisation. We could train them quicker because they already had those skills, particularly in our station operations. We employed 49—I think the most of the generators—but we also picked the best person for the role at the time. In some cases, other people who were not Hazelwood employees picked up roles—so young people in the region as well, and others—but we did re-employ 49 people coming out of Hazelwood over that time. So it was a win-win-win.

The CHAIR: Yes, and I think even with this closure, the planning is 2040 to 2045. It does give people that are I guess looking for employment in 2022 an opportunity to understand that unlike the previous generations there may not be a job for life, but it is still a rewarding job, well remunerated, and you get to pick up skills. Because the nature of work is changing, and the era of maybe my parents' generation when they did work in one job for a quarter of a century is less and less likely. So it is important that skills and integration—what I am trying to get at is: how is AGL's relationship with the local education providers making sure your staff get nationally accredited skills? Because that is right—I think one of the key things we are hearing is people might need to do a few different jobs in their lifetime, so they need nationally accredited skills so they are transferable.

Mr RIENIETS: Yes, we have very good relationships with Federation Uni locally here, very good relationships with Monash and very good relationships with the local TAFE. I think the key is what I would term 'employability', right? So AGL might be part of that employability journey, but as you rightly point out, the skills and experience you learn during that time give you opportunities perhaps in other industries as they emerge.

The CHAIR: That is right. I might go back to Ms Bath.

Ms BATH: Thanks, Chair. That is really good. And on that point I think on one of your slides you had \$116 million and it ended up being about \$420 million in, we will say, additional contract work—or maybe it was the engineers outside or something; I did not quite get that. But it felt like it was subsidiary to you but dependent on you—as in AGL. If you want to explain that a little bit more? The point I am making is it will have a flow-on effect. Likewise, when Hazelwood closed there were many manufacturers who worked in and supported that industry, and so it is your workers but it is also finding alternate sources of work and careers for those sorts of people—or to expand into other markets. My question is: how important is that regional Gippsland task force to you, and how are you engaging with that?

Mr van NIEKERK: I think it is obviously critical that we support that, and we will continue—even LVA—to support them through our stakeholder engagement. I mean, you have mentioned the figure of \$116 million. That is what we spent on external service providers in the region. It was not spent on our own employees; we have got a large portion of our onsite workers contracted out to external service providers—that is, our maintenance—and also in particular our outage, our shuts, because you do not staff up to deal with those peaks and troughs. The \$360-odd million was also to external service providers that we spent, and I think that is your point exactly. I mean the question is: what goes beyond that? So it is really about supporting this transition from a regional perspective, and as I have indicated we are very keen to work closely with local government, with the LVA and with state government in terms of what that looks like. Then as we progress and we start developing this concept of the energy hub and start looking at industries and establishing those on the energy hubs, it is how we also then create opportunities for external suppliers apart from the construction part—also the maintenance and the continuous operations of those industries that we are keen to establish. As I said, we are open and very, very keen to work closely with the relevant state and local government institutions to progress that.

Ms BATH: And is that happening as well as you would like it to now, and/or would you like to see an expansion of that or a greater regularity in the future?

Mr van NIEKERK: As I have indicated, we are also working with the local Latrobe Valley municipality in terms of their initiatives. We have been and we are very keen to progress working closely with the LVA. Some of our stakeholder engagement management people are in fact here, so they are working closely with these parties on a continuous basis, and we are really keen and open to even look at ways and means to work closer and look at schemes and mechanisms to progress that.

Ms BATH: Thank you. And my last question—thank you, Chair—there has been some considerable media interest in a gentleman by the name of Mr Cannon-Brookes of recent times, and people who have shares et cetera will be more than interested in this topic. At the end of the day people in our region want affordable, sustainable, reliable electricity and want ongoing jobs into the future at the moment—as in until there is something better to go to or further to go to. Should this committee be worried or people in the valley be worried about this particular person?

Mr RIENIETS: No, I think there will be a lot of noise around all of that; we recognise that. Our plan at the moment is to continue and push forward with the demerger of the company into Accel and AGL Australia. We think that gives the shareholders the best return going forward, recognising that the world is changing. It is decarbonising, but the three key pillars have to be maintained—sustainable, affordable, reliable. I have been around long enough to see blackouts, and some in the room probably have as well. That will trump affordability in my opinion, if we have unreliable sources of energy.

Ms BATH: We do not want diesel generators sitting on our tarmac.

Mr RIENIETS: No.

Ms BATH: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Mr Barton.

Mr BARTON: I have got one little question. Water is always a big topic. Where are you going to get your water from to fill those mine sites?

Mr RIENIETS: Water?

Mr van NIEKERK: Where are we going to get the water from—is that the question?

Mr BARTON: Yes.

Mr van NIEKERK: The basis for our planning has always been working on our current water allocation in terms of what has been allocated for our power generation, so it is really about just progressing that after shutdown. So it is not about requesting additional water allocation; it is really just using the allocation that we have currently got.

Mr RIENIETS: I think the issue is certainty over water, because we are making decisions today that are multigenerational. No-one in this room is going to be around in 2080, when Loy Yang finally hand in their mining licence when the rehabilitation is finished. We are making decisions today that have impact for generations, so we need to have certainty, and the costs associated with that and the potential impact on the longevity of the business are important as well.

Mr van NIEKERK: Let me just clarify the water allocation. We are talking about Loy Yang A and B, so it is about the total complex water allocation, not just about Loy Yang A. Obviously there is a total water allocation for the total complex. That is what we are planning on and that is what we have always planned on in terms of our final landform rehabilitation plan.

The CHAIR: Just add to that, a lot of people say that we have seen these projects in the UK and Germany, and obviously your expertise is in energy. With some of that rehabilitation work, is that a role that government needs to proactively play in that space?

Mr RIENIETS: It takes a village to raise a child; I think it takes a village to work out what we are going to do here. Everyone will need to have input into this. It cannot be one single operator, because every operator impacts on all the others when it comes to things like water. So it needs a whole-of-industry and a whole-of-government approach to this.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Steve and Christo. It has been very informative. AGL's submission and presentation today will assist our deliberations going forward. I enjoyed the full and frank discussion on a number of issues affecting our state and the region.

Committee adjourned.