



Offshore Wind Industry - Gippsland Consultation

The Gippsland region is well suited for offshore wind due to a range of factors like excellent offshore wind capacity, nearby energy workforce, and proximity to existing grid infrastructure.

The Australian Government has worked closely with the Victorian Government and Wellington Shire Council to understand the views of the Gippsland community on a future offshore wind industry. The formal consultation process included:

- Six open house community sessions, attended by more than 500 people across the region, including in Morwell, Lakes Entrance, Sale, Yarram, Wonthaggi and Leongatha
- engaging with First Nations groups
- meeting with various regional groups including commercial fishing organisations and port authorities
- hosting online industry-specific sessions
- online meetings with offshore renewable energy project proponents.
- an online submission process, which received a total of 765 submissions.

Many in the Gippsland community expressed support for the development of an offshore wind industry. Specifically, community members highlighted the potential for offshore wind in the following areas:

- Local economy—local jobs and industry growth, including opportunity for transition of skilled workers from retiring coal-fired power plants to offshore renewables, opportunity for local skills and training development, and local content.
- Clean renewable energy—the transition to sustainable low-emissions energy sources was widely supported.
- Environment—the potential of offshore renewable energy projects to create new habitats for marine species.

Some members of the Gippsland community also expressed reservations about the development, primarily, reservations were about:

- Visual impacts—view of turbines and on-land transmission reducing the visual amenity of places of natural significance was a concern.
- Environmental impacts—the potential impact of turbines on endangered migratory bird species as well as construction noise on whales, dolphins and other sea life.
- Other industry impacts—the tourism, commercial and recreational fishing sectors were concerned that an offshore renewables industry could mean they will be excluded from the area.

The Minister for Climate Change and Energy has listened and declared an updated, smaller area for offshore wind projects, taking on board reservations expressed as part of the consultation process:

- The declared area in Gippsland, Victoria, covers about 15,000 square kilometres offshore, and runs from Lakes Entrance in the east to south of Wilsons Promontory in the west.
- The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments are committed to working together over the coming year to consider the Gippsland coast west of Wilsons Prom, including further consultation with Traditional Owners and taking into account community feedback and information on environmental risks of developing offshore electricity infrastructure in the area.
- The Government has additionally reaffirmed its commitment to working with states and territories, market bodies, networks and communities on reforming the regulatory framework around transmission (the RIT-T), to include genuine engagement throughout – not just at the end of the planning process for transmission.

A substantial declared area has been retained that will support the growth of an offshore renewables industry in the Gippsland region and increase regional investment, create job opportunities and improve energy security, while helping Victoria and the nation reach our climate goals.

Further consultations will take place on any proposed developments, once feasibility licences are issued.

Figure 1: Map of Gippsland declared area

