

Offshore Renewable Energy Declaration

Pacific Ocean off the Illawarra region, New South Wales

Public Consultation Summary Report

June 2024

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Introduction

On 14 August 2023, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy announced that an area offshore extending from Wombarra to Kiama in New South Wales (NSW), for this purpose referred to as the Illawarra region, was being considered for its suitability to be declared as an offshore renewable energy area under the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* (OEI Act). This is the fourth area to be considered under the legislative framework and is another step forward in enabling the development of offshore renewable energy in Australia.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of consultation on the Notice of Proposal for the area proposed in the Illawarra region, including a summary of the responses received during targeted and public consultation. The responses received as part of the public consultation process reflect considerable time and effort on the part of the respondents. The submissions provided valuable information for the Minister when deciding to declare an area off in the Illawarra Region as suitable for offshore renewable energy infrastructure.

The opinions expressed in this report were presented by stakeholders during the public consultation period and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian or NSW governments.

Development of the Notice of Proposal

The Notice of Proposal to declare an area in the Illawarra region, extending from Wombarra to Kiama in NSW as suitable for offshore renewable energy infrastructure was developed through consultation with Australian and NSW Government agencies.

Consultation process

Public consultation

The Minister published the Notice of Proposal for the area off the Illawarra region on 14 August 2023. This commenced the statutory public consultation period as required under the OEI Act. Members of the public were able to make submissions via the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's 'Have Your Say' web platform. This commenced an initial 65-day public consultation period, which was due to close on 16 October 2023.

In accordance with the OEI Act, this timeline was similar to consultation periods for previously declared areas. Community interest and media coverage rapidly increased and the Consultation Hub page received hundreds of submissions per day. Various groups initiated social media campaigns both supporting and opposing the proposed area, and in many cases argued that the original public consultation period was insufficient. The Minister extended the public consultation period until 15 November 2023 to provide the community with 94 days to make a submission to the public consultation process.

The Notice of Proposal was accompanied by a dataset titled '*Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 – Proposed Area – Pacific Ocean off Illawarra region, NSW*' that identified the proposed area to be declared. An indicative map of the proposed area was also included in the notice. The Consultation Hub page included several resources to provide respondents with additional information in relation to the proposal. This included:

- A document providing an overview of the proposed area and FAQs titled 'Overview of the Proposed Area – Illawarra Region'
- A document providing an overview of existing marine users and interests in the vicinity of the proposed area titled 'Marine Users, Interests and the Environment – Illawarra Region'

- A shapefile of the proposed area for download
- A link to an interactive map of the proposed area hosted by Geoscience Australia.

Information on the public consultation was shared across a number of platforms, including on the department's [website](#) and social media channels: X (formally Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. The department carried out several forms of advertising for the proposal, including posts on social media, notices in local and regional newspapers, articles in local newspapers, radio advertisements and flyer drops to residents in coastal areas adjacent to the proposal. The announcement itself also received media coverage, and information on the proposed area was shared more broadly across bigger regional newspapers and websites.

The proposed area off the Illawarra quickly gained a far greater degree of attention across traditional media platforms and social media than previous offshore renewable energy area proposals. A significant theme in this heightened public conversation was the lack of easily accessible detailed information from the Australian Government about possible real-world offshore wind projects that could be developed if the area is declared. There was also a significant increase in the prevalence of misinformation across media platforms, particularly digital platforms, compared to previous public consultations periods.

The potential visibility and appearance of future offshore wind projects was a common concern. In response to these concerns, DCCEEW produced and published visualisations of how hypothetical offshore windfarms may look from selected vantage points around the Illawarra region.

The overall purpose of the public consultation was to inform the community of the proposal and seek feedback through public submissions on current uses and users of the area to inform the Minister's decision on whether the proposed area is suitable for offshore renewable energy development.

First Nations consultation

First Nations people have a strong connection with the land and the sea across the Illawarra region. The Illawarra and South Coast of NSW is the traditional land and sea country of the Dharawal and Yuin people.

The department commenced engagement with the First Nations groups early in the declaration process and has maintained regular ongoing engagement throughout the process. We have consulted with various First Nations organisations and community members through in-person and online meetings. We have also provided regular email and phone updates throughout Illawarra declaration process to several First Nations contacts.

The contacts include the Illawarra, Tharawal, Jerrinja and La Perouse local aboriginal land councils (LALC), Illawarra Aboriginal Community Based Working Group (IACBWG), engagement and liaison officers from councils in the Illawarra region, the National Indigenous Australian Agency, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation, Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation, cultural organisations in the Illawarra region and others.

Community information sessions

The community was invited to participate in community drop-in sessions held during the consultation period across the Illawarra. In total, six community information sessions were held in Bulli, Port Kembla, Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Gerringong from 18 to 21 September 2023, attracting an estimated 1275 attendees.

For each session, departmental staff were on-site and available to talk to members of the community, together with representatives from the Nature Positive Regulation Division of the department and a representative from Geoscience Australia.

At the sessions, attendees were briefed by department representatives on elements of the proposal and the regulatory process, provided with the opportunity to ask questions, discuss key issues, and understand the importance of providing feedback via a submission.

Departmental staff also attended two public meetings in Thirroul and Wollongong arranged by the Federal Member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes MP on 7 October and 11 October 2023 respectively.

Online sessions

Local industry stakeholders were invited to participate in online, industry-specific sessions held during the consultation period. Five online sessions were held between 4 September and 14 September 2023. Sessions covered thematic areas of commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and local business, community and environmental groups, and the maritime industry.

Approximately 40 individuals attended these online sessions. These sessions allowed targeted discussions on the interaction of potential offshore renewable energy projects with specific local industries and gave an opportunity to answer any questions local industry representatives might have, to better equip themselves to provide informed feedback to the consultation process.

Analysis of submissions

The department undertook an analysis of the submissions received. The analysis was to understand overall public sentiment toward the proposal represented in the submissions, and to identify the range of concerns and benefits of the proposal to assist the Minister's decision whether to declare the area as suitable for offshore renewable energy.

While statistics have been provided in this report to support the analysis of general sentiment of submissions, the department is aware there are multiple factors that have limited the validity of these statistics. These factors include:

- Submissions made using non-valid email addresses
- Multiple submissions made from the same person(s), and financial inducements offered for submissions
- Submissions possibly generated by artificial intelligence (AI) software

The analysis of submissions has focussed on the content and information provided by each submission.

Overview of submissions

Types of respondents

Respondents were able to respond as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. A total of 14,211 submissions were received. 170 (1.2%) were made on behalf of an organisation, and the remaining 14,041 submissions (98.8%) were made by an individual or individuals.

Individuals

Individuals were asked to identify what best describes themselves and Figure 1 shows the breakdown. Most individuals identified as a local resident (73%), with regular visitors or holidaymakers to the area the next largest (11%) group.

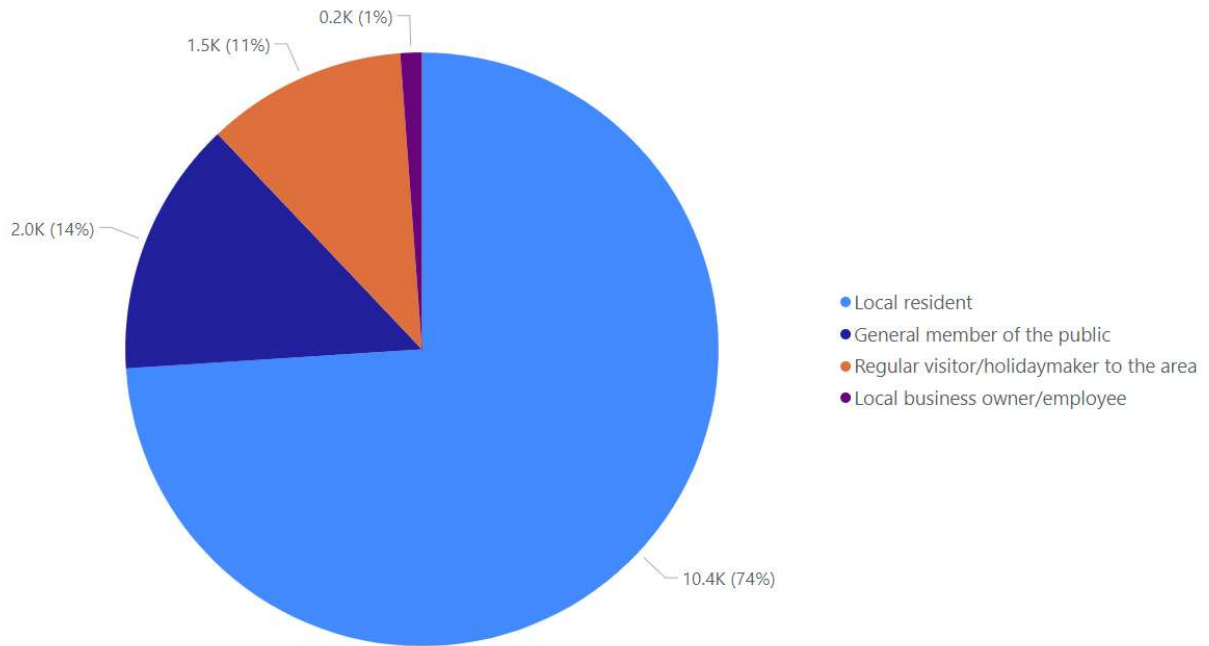


Figure 1 – Responses of individuals

Respondents were also asked to identify their postcode. A breakdown of the locations of the individuals who made submissions can be seen in Figure 2.

Of the submissions from individuals, over 72% of the individual submissions received were from residents in the coastal local council areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and Shoalhaven. 55% of submissions were from the Wollongong City council area and 21% of submissions were from areas outside the local council areas of New South Wales.

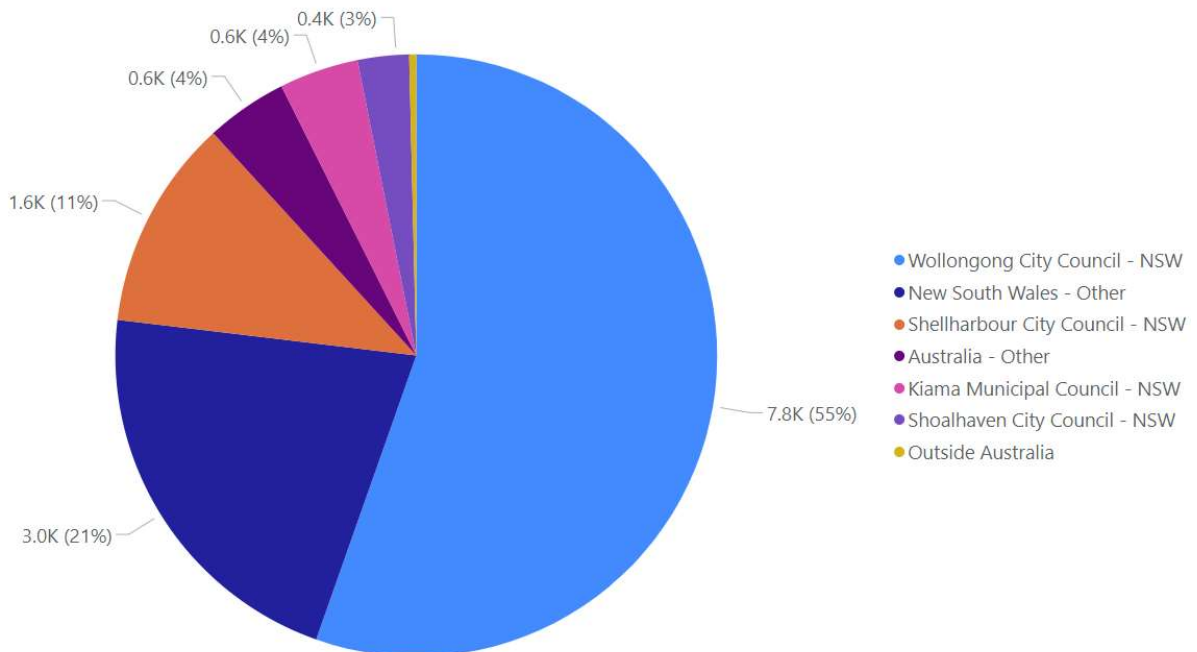


Figure 2 – Locations of individuals submissions

Organisations

Organisations which made a submission were asked to categorise the sector that best describes their organisation. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of sectors for all responses from organisations. Overall, the largest portion of responses from organisations came from non-government or community organisations (25%). The next most represented sectors were non-government organisations (18%) and industry other (16%).

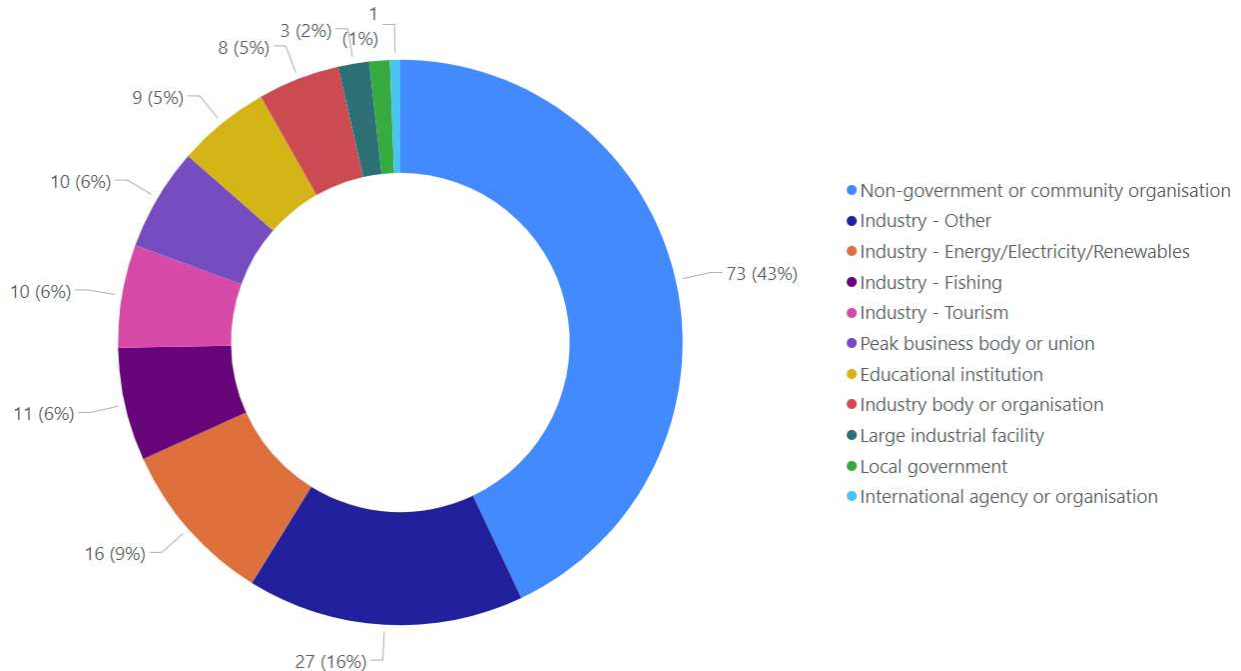


Figure 3 – Submissions from organisations by sector

Organisations representing members

Approximately 53 submissions from organisations were from those representing their members, including fishers, workers, First Nations, and environmental groups. Each of these groups have been estimated to represent anywhere from approximately 20 to 500,000 members.

Further details of these organisations, number of members represented, level of support for this proposal and any specific feedback, can be found for those with public submissions in Appendix A.

Feedback outside submissions

Subsection 19(2) of the OEI Act sets out that when deciding whether an area is suitable for offshore renewable energy infrastructure,

The Minister may also have regard to any other matters that the Minister considers relevant

The Minister determined that he considered material that resembled submissions that was posted to the department, or emailed to the Minister directly, constituted relevant material. In total 12 responses were received that were considered under subsection 19(2). These responses were not considered in the wider analysis reported below, however the benefits and concerns identified were consistent with the analysis of formal submissions received via the consultation portal.

Feedback within submissions

General sentiment

All submissions were asked to select whether they were generally supportive or opposed to the proposal, and if they had any specific concerns. The general sentiment towards the proposal suggested 65% of submissions were opposed to the proposal, 33% of submissions were supportive of the proposal, and 2% of submissions were neither supportive or opposed (Figure 4). Approximately 6% were supportive but had specific concerns and 16% who were opposed with specific concerns regarding the proposal.

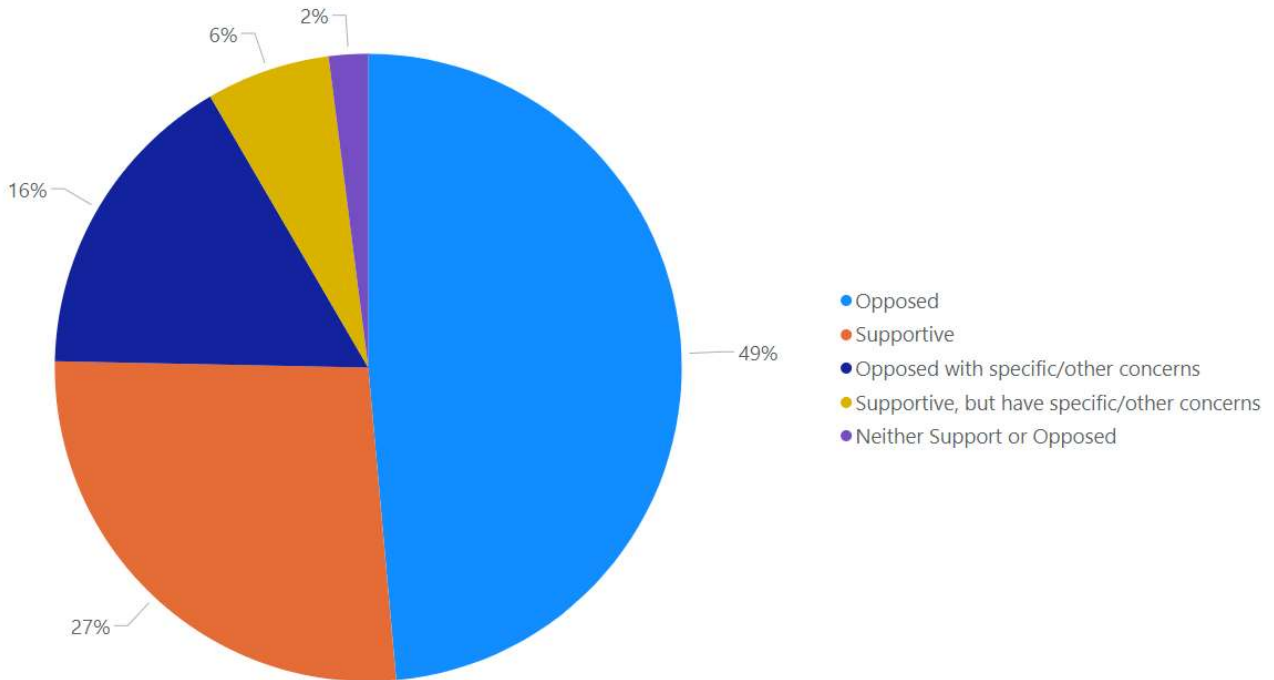


Figure 4 – General sentiment towards the proposal

While the majority of those who made submissions stated they were opposed to the proposal, it should be noted that these submissions are not a representative sample of the population. Some submissions made were from organisations on behalf of their members. For further information on these see Appendix A. The validity of statistics associated with this analysis is discussed in the Analysis of Submissions section on page 5 of this document.

All respondents were provided the option to expand on concerns, opportunities and benefits of the proposal across the main themes of community and onshore transmission, environment, fishing and other. Variations of sentiment were observed within submissions. Commonly submissions that cited opposition to the proposal also included details of benefits and opportunities, while other supportive submissions contained concerns in respect to individual themes. The variations and range of concerns, benefits and opportunities expressed in submissions have been examined further in the following sections.

First Nations

First Nations groups in the Illawarra have provided feedback into the public consultation process for the proposed Illawarra offshore wind area and their feedback was considered by the Minister in determining whether the area was suitable for offshore wind. First Nations groups have requested that the content of their submissions remains private.

There were 540 submissions (4%) that mentioned First Nations people in relation to the proposed offshore wind area. The cultural significance and connection of Sea Country was mentioned in many of these

submissions. Submissions mentioned concerns about the disturbance of submerged cultural heritage and the importance of its protection due to the coastline being in a different location before the current sea level stabilised approximately 5000 years ago. Submissions also highlighted the importance of whales to the Dharawal people and concerns regarding the potential impacts on whales migrating through the proposed area.

"Whales are a totem for the Dharawal people and are considered tribal ancestors, treated with the same respect as immediate relatives. There are concerns that the region will displace whales from their traditional travel routes and migration pathways, which would greatly impact cultural connections to the Illawarra region and disruption to song lines — intangible culture connections to land, water and sky. " (Shellharbour City Council, #6640)

Submissions mentioned the importance of undertaking meaningful, accessible, and culturally appropriate consultation with First Nations groups regarding the proposed area. Submissions also noted that the process of developing the offshore wind area should be done with the engagement and knowledge of the Dharawal people who have a deep understanding of and connection to the land and sea country that supports a sustainable way of life in the Illawarra. There was concern that future developers consulting with First Nations groups may be a burden to many of these groups who may be under funded and under resourced.

"We recommend that high priority be given to First Nations engagement and partnership. We also recommend a coordinated approach to avoid unnecessary consultation burdens on First Nations organisations. In particular, practical support should be provided to Aboriginal organisations and grassroots communities to assist them to negotiate adequately resourced, long-term benefits for their communities as well as measures to support in the protection of underwater and coastal cultural heritage." (Good for the Gong, #11384)

Many of these submissions mentioned that First Nations people should benefit from the development of the proposed area including but not limited to employment targets or mandates, business opportunities, educational initiatives and economic empowerment. Some submissions suggested that free and informed consent should be obtained from Traditional Owners for the proposed area to proceed.

Benefits of offshore wind and opportunities for the region

Many submissions noted benefits of offshore renewables and opportunities for the region, across various themes. Figure 5 shows the percentage of submissions that identified benefits and/or opportunities across the main themes of community, local economy and onshore transmissions, environmental and fishing.

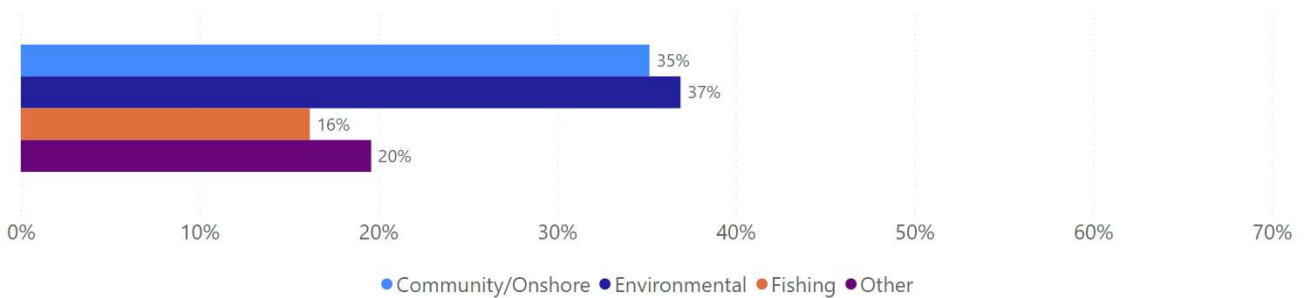


Figure 5 – Submissions identifying benefits or opportunities

Community, local economy and onshore transmission benefits

A total of 4,999 submissions (approximately 35%) noted benefits of offshore renewable energy projects to the community, local economy and onshore transmission. These included broad sentiments focusing on economic benefits, increased employment opportunities for local communities, the positive impact of increased tourism to the region, the positive impact on community health in the region, benefits of a cleaner environment and reduced energy costs. Many respondents felt that a highly skilled and locally available workforce coupled with industry capability, existing transmission infrastructure and port facilities made the Illawarra region an ideal location for the development of offshore renewables.

Many submissions noted that offshore wind would ensure energy security for the Illawarra and provide cheaper, cleaner electricity for big industries but also for domestic and commercial uses. Submissions emphasised that offshore wind would provide clean energy for future generations to come and that the benefits far outweighed any drawbacks related to visual amenity. Investing in clean energy as a necessary step in dealing with climate change and in ensuring energy security as well as energy equity was frequently mentioned in submissions. Respondents felt that offshore wind was a reliable source of power beneficial in the development of green industries, especially green steel and hydrogen and providing a boost to green economy in the Illawarra.

"The vision of 'green steel' produced in Port Kembla is unlikely to be realised without the establishment of a significant Offshore Wind capability off the Illawarra coast." (Australian Institute of Marine Power Engineers and Australian Maritime Officers Union, #2464)

Investing in onshore transmission and port facilities was viewed by submissions as beneficial in enabling green electricity for homes and industries including maritime industries. Submissions noted that offshore wind complemented other clean energy technologies including solar and onshore wind. Shared use of the transmission infrastructure was also recommended by some submissions.

"The wind blows stronger at night, and complements Australia's incredible solar resources during the day. Together they can provide sustainable energy around the clock." (Electrify 2515, #7130)

Submissions from various community and labour organisations, businesses, individual citizens and local governments considered that offshore wind projects had the potential to create direct and indirect local employment opportunities. Submissions noted the benefits of an offshore wind industry in the Illawarra as a major industrial hub already housing heavy industry such as mining and power generation, steel making, large scale shipping and a major international port all powered by fossil fuels.

“Offshore wind farms especially those in regional areas such as the Illawarra and Newcastle will create jobs and attract people to live and work in those areas. This will in turn boost the local economies of those areas, creating further opportunities locally.” (Submission #8456)

Some submissions stated that it was the government’s responsibility to ensure job security. Guaranteed benefits for First Nations people and training opportunities for workers currently employed in fossil fuel related industries to transition to the renewables sector were some of the recommendations offered in submissions. Many saw the creation of job opportunities for young people as a huge benefit in the context of increased job opportunities and retaining young talent in the area.

Some submissions recommended the development of training programs, stating that a skills development program to help energy workers transition to renewables as well as to provide training opportunities for youth was necessary in ensuring the success of offshore wind projects. Submissions recommended that a comprehensive and proper training program be developed nation-wide in conjunction with credible training organisations offering a range of skills and knowledge-based training programs required for this emerging industry.

A few submissions suggested that a taskforce or advisory committee comprising of a mix of local businesses, academics and windfarm stakeholders would be beneficial in being able to facilitate community engagement and employment and training needs for potential projects. These types of measures were seen as contributing directly to developing local talent and jobs.

“Offshore renewable projects in the Area must use local manufacturing and ensure that workers can be trained up for these renewable energy jobs. Governments must ensure adequate port facilities for construction and operations are created in within the declared region to capture local economic benefits.” (CFMMEU & ETU, #13428)

Submissions noted that for the offshore wind industry to be of significant benefit to the local economy, local manufacturing needed to be developed to its full potential. This included manufacturing wind turbines locally, expanding steel industries and providing incentives for local procurement and resourcing. Some noted the opportunity for Illawarra businesses to be part of the supply chain.

“The economic benefits of offshore wind should flow to workers and local businesses, not just to private shareholders. The project should have a minimum commitment to support local manufacturing, jobs and training.” (Electrify 2515, #7130)

Submissions also emphasised other potential community benefits from an offshore wind industry in the Illawarra region including having a local source of reliable renewable energy and increased investment in sectors like education, research and community infrastructure. Submissions suggested that tourists could be drawn to the Illawarra specifically for offshore wind farm viewing and tours with some submissions seeing opportunities for increased ecotourism associated with artificial reefs and marine habitats around the wind towers.

Some submissions referred to the positive impact wind turbines could have on the health of residents due to cleaner air in the region and positive mental health for the younger generations who were worried about the future. Other submissions suggested benefits to mental health for the community, and the feeling that they were contributing to a greener future.

A community benefits scheme where the local community directly benefitted from hosting an offshore wind farm in their region was recommended by many submissions from the community, local members of parliament, local councils, the University of Wollongong and local business. It was considered that the Illawarra community should be entitled to a return from the offshore wind investment as a way of being compensated for living adjacent to large-scale infrastructure. These submissions recommended that a small percentage of profits from the development of the offshore wind industry be used to support the

community through community projects, public facilities, schools and vulnerable sectors of the community thereby directly contributing to the social, environmental and economic progress of the region.

Addressing climate change, renewable energy and environmental benefits

A total of 5,246 (37%) submissions considered that they could see benefits or opportunities related to the environment for offshore renewable energy in this proposed area.

Reducing Australia's reliance on using fossil fuels, such as coal, to produce electricity was one of the main benefits mentioned in support of developing the proposed area for offshore wind in the Illawarra. Many submissions considered that the significant generation capacity offered by the proposed offshore wind area could replace energy from retiring coal fired power stations. The proposed offshore wind area was seen by some submissions as an opportunity to accelerate the transition to a clean, unlimited renewable energy source which could supply energy into the grid during day and night.

The reduction in the use of coal to produce electricity was seen to have positive outcomes, with submissions identifying:

- Improvements to air quality (and associated health benefits) due to reduced air pollution by carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and particulates.
- less coal mining and the associated damage to land and aquifers
- less coal trucks on the road
- less coal trains with their associated dust and noise
- fewer ships carrying coal (less bunker oil burning, whale strikes, anchoring on the sea bed damaging the sea bed);
- reduce our carbon emissions which cause climate change; and
- avoiding thermal pollution from coal fired power station cooling waters.

“The benefits to the environment are huge, offshore wind is critically important to the energy transition and the environmental benefits that flow on from that. Shutting down dirty coal plants and replacing it with offshore wind is great for the environment.” (Submission #8179)

Many submissions supported the proposed offshore wind area as it was seen as a low greenhouse gas emission technology that would provide an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address global warming and reduce community vulnerability to climate change. Respondents considered that it would contribute towards the decarbonisation of Australia's energy network and economy and assist in meeting net zero emissions of greenhouse gases.

“...we are in a climate emergency. If the world does not reach net zero emissions quickly, the Illawarra faces environment and societal disruption far greater than the effects of windfarms like the Illawarra proposal.” (Wollongong Climate Action Network, #5221)

Some submissions were concerned pollution and rising sea temperatures were already impacting ocean life and the proposed offshore wind area was seen as an opportunity to slow global warming and sea level rises and impacts on the coastal environment of the Illawarra. The concern for marine life in the region due to wind farms was seen to be insignificant in comparison to the issues posed by climate change. Some submissions stated that the impact on marine life of any wind farm needed to be weighed against the effects of continuing with the generation of electricity using coal and gas and the associated production of carbon dioxide and devastating effects of climate change. There was concern from some submissions that the development of offshore wind will not happen fast enough.

"Climate change is an immense threat to our local and planetary environment. Warming of the Southern Ocean is already affecting the feeding grounds for the whales that migrate up and down our coast every year. We are currently well off-track to meet what the global science recommends is needed if we are to avoid catastrophic impacts. We know that burning fossil fuels for energy is a leading cause of climate change and we must transition to renewable sources of energy urgently. Offshore wind farms plays a key role in that transition off polluting fossil fuels due to its capacity and reliability." (Electrify 2515, #7130)

Mining and the steel works in the area were identified in submissions as the region's biggest carbon emitters. The electricity generated by offshore wind was seen as a great opportunity by many respondents for the Illawarra to lead the transition away from fossil fuel dependent industries. Submissions supported the location of offshore wind adjacent to Port Kembla as an opportunity to produce green hydrogen and green steel and in turn encourage other green energy industries in the Illawarra.

Some submissions supported the development of wind farms in the ocean as it would not require the destruction of bushland or land that could otherwise be used for farming, housing or parkland. The generation of electricity close to where it is used also requires less environmental disturbance (access roads, land clearing for transmission) and cost for transmission. The development of wind farms in the ocean was also seen by some respondents to have less issues for landowners, be less disruptive than coal mining or solar farms, have less noise and therefore be generally less disruptive than onshore wind farms.

"With 87% of Australia's population living within 50km of the coast, offshore wind enables enormous renewable energy production close to where energy is consumed. This reduces transmission losses and avoids the significant costs and environmental impacts of lengthy transmission lines to connect inland renewable energy projects to the grid." (Blue Energy Futures Lab, University of Wollongong, #4454)

The proposed development of offshore wind farms in the Illawarra area was seen by some submissions as an opportunity to undertake research, monitoring and collect data on offshore reef, birds, whales and other marine life, which will increase our knowledge and understanding of the marine environment. Other submissions noted that offshore wind farms create structures for the formation of an artificial reef/habitat for marine life, with benefits for fish and all marine species. While other submissions were concerned about the possible impact on whales and other marine life, the impact of climate change was seen by some respondents as a greater threat.

Visual amenity

A total of 3879 (approximately 27%) submissions stated that they did not have concerns about the impact of the proposed offshore wind area on visual amenity.

The visual impact of offshore wind turbines is subjective with supportive submissions saying they "look cool", are beautiful as they rotate or will be hardly noticeable.

Submissions in support stated that they were not concerned about the proposed offshore wind area impacting visual amenity. Many of these submissions considered that visual impacts would be minimal due to their distance from the shore. There was concern that the impact on visual amenity was being "exaggerated by scaremongering".

Many submissions expressed that they did not have any concerns with the visual amenity of offshore wind turbines. The move to cleaner energy, the decarbonisation of the energy supply and addressing climate change was mentioned prominently with submissions commenting that the environmental benefits of offshore wind farms would far outweigh any concerns regarding visual impacts. The potential visual impact of offshore wind turbines was considered to be minor and less important than the environmental imperative

of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change. Many expressed the need to move much faster on renewable energy in Australia and that offshore wind farms provided a solution.

“Let’s face it, they aren’t attractive, but they offer a solution and fossil fuels are much worse”
(Submission #14211)

Some submissions supported and welcomed seeing wind farms versus coal ships on the horizon every day waiting to go into the port. Wind farms were seen as being no worse than seeing the steel works or coal ships on the horizon. Seeing wind turbines on the horizon was considered to be a small price to pay for cleaner energy. Wind farms were also seen as being better than looking at open cut coal mines and coal fire power stations.

Other submissions considered that the Illawarra should do what it can to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia and the world.

“ We cannot hope to combat the huge and devastating environmental problem of climate change without some smaller environmental sacrifices. We have to accept the visual imposition of wind and solar farms and the infrastructure they entail. BIG changes are needed. We have to accept that the landscape will look different. And then one day, it won't. It will be normal.” (Submission #8236)

Commercial and recreational fishing benefits

A total of 2,298 (17%) submissions identified potential benefits and/or opportunities for fishing.

Mitigation of the impacts of climate change on ocean species and ecosystems was the major benefit identified in submissions, with responses noting the need to transition to renewable energy in order to avoid negative impacts on the marine environment.

Submissions noted the potential for offshore wind infrastructure to improve fisheries abundance by functioning as artificial reefs or Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), with increased habitat supporting greater populations of fish with flow on benefits for commercial and recreational fishers. Exclusion zones around offshore electricity infrastructure and potential limitations to large scale commercial fishing operations was seen as an opportunity to provide marine sanctuaries to protect fish and improve outcomes for fish species. Submissions noted the benefits of excluding commercial trawl fishing.

“It may provide fishing exclusion zones and artificial reefs where fish numbers can build up after construction.” (Submission #14084)

Other submissions suggested that to realise the benefits of improved habitats provided by offshore wind infrastructure, access to the area close to turbines must be allowed for fishing, noting that without this access there is no benefit to the fishing industry, and access has been permitted internationally around offshore wind farms.

“Potential benefits for fisherman if exclusion zones around turbines are minimised or not declared at all. Structures represent significant fish aggregating devices if near access is allowed to recreational fishing.”
(Submission #7042)

A small number of submissions emphasised that the development of projects must include engagement and collaboration with the fishing industry to ensure benefits, and consideration of fisher concerns in future project design.

Other benefits or opportunities

A total of 2,786 submissions (approximately 20%) identified other benefits or opportunities for offshore wind in the Illawarra area.

Many submissions identified the enhancement of the Illawarra's reputation as a leader in the energy transition and an example to other regions. Some submissions noted the importance of including offshore wind in demonstrating Australia's commitment combating climate change to the rest of the world.

Independent research undertaken in 2023 at the University of Wollongong, provided as part of the Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society and Space submission, showed that young adults in the Illawarra (ages 18 to 30) are particularly supportive of offshore wind as a symbol of innovative leadership. Improving local community pride and mental health was identified in some submissions as a benefit of offshore wind's climate change mitigation effects.

"The key themes that have emerged to date from the data analysis are as follows: 1. Concern about the impacts of climate change and an opportunity for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region to lead on renewables". (Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society and Space, University of Wollongong, #12041)

Some submissions specifically highlighted Port Kembla's potentially important role in the success of offshore wind in the Illawarra region, including the potential to decarbonise the established steel industry there. Other submissions commented on the potential for transitioning and developing the Australian manufacturing industry and using local resources.

"There are substantial prospects for NSW to lead the advancements in areas such as floating foundations, mooring and anchoring systems, welding automation and robotics, and advanced materials suitable for marine environments." (Blue Energy Futures Lab, University of Wollongong, #4454)

Other benefits listed in submissions included cheaper electricity and improvements to energy security through grid diversification. Another benefit raised in submissions was offshore wind's capacity factor advantage compared to land-based wind farms.

Concerns regarding offshore wind for the region

Many submissions noted concerns and discussed those who are currently using this marine area. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the percentage of submissions that identified concerns and existing marine users across the main themes of community, local economy, transmission, environmental, fishing and visual amenity.

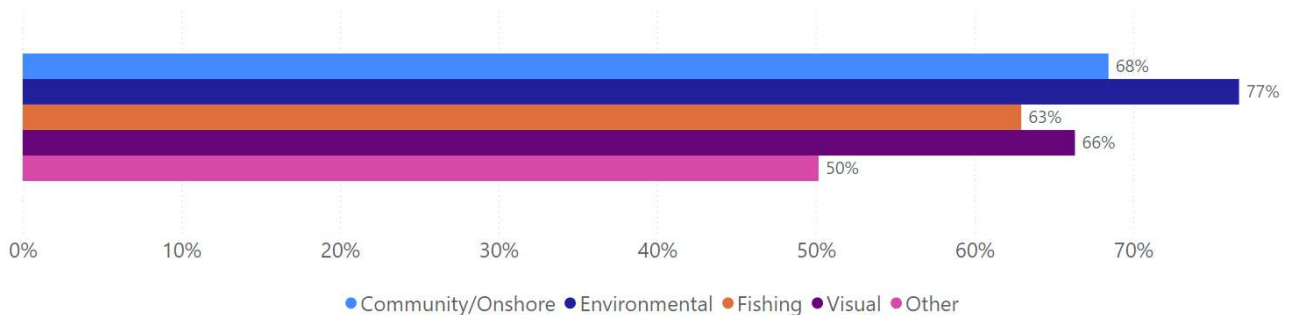


Figure 6 – Submissions identifying concerns regarding the proposed area

Environmental concerns

The potential impact of offshore wind farms on the environment was a prominent concern raised in submissions, with approximately 77% of submissions (10,895 submissions) raising various environmental concerns.

A concern raised in many submissions was that an environmental assessment had not been undertaken upfront before determining an area that may be suitable for offshore wind. The community was concerned that the environmental impacts of the proposed area were unknown. It was seen as a conflict of interest for developers to undertake their own environmental assessments. It was suggested that either environmental assessments are undertaken by an independent consultant, such as a university, or are peer reviewed by an appropriate expert.

" I have some concerns, but these could be allayed through further studies, environmental assessment impact assessments, mitigation measures, long term monitoring of impacts, and more community education about the risks and benefits of having an offshore wind farm in the Illawarra. (Submission #5710)

"WCC understands that the assessment of environmental impacts such as those above is part of the regulatory and approvals process and the onus for undertaking such assessments is on the project developers and/or proponents. The community has expressed concern over the transparency and integrity of such a process and it is recommended that consideration be given to the commissioning of independent impact assessment to complement the proponent-led studies. " (Wollongong City Council, #13261)

A frequent concern raised in submissions with environmental concerns was the potential impact of offshore wind farms on whales that migrate along the NSW coastline. Submissions were concerned that no information had been provided about the migratory paths of whales or the potential impact of the proposed area on whale migration, feeding and breeding. There was a view that an offshore wind farm could create obstacles to the movement of whales and there was a risk of collisions.

There were also concerns that noise and vibrations from an offshore wind farm would affect whale hearing, echolocation, behaviour, communication and therefore disrupt their navigation and migration and increase the rate of beaching. There was concern about noise from seismic surveys and the view that construction of wind farms should not be allowed to occur during periods of whale migration. Some submissions were

concerned with whale strandings and deaths, which had occurred in the United States and they considered to be related to offshore wind development.

Submissions raised concerns about the proposed offshore wind area being in the flight path of birds, particularly those that migrate along the coastline such as shearwaters, eastern curlews and other endangered birds. The presence of wind turbines was seen as disrupting the free movement of birds as it may cause the diversion of birds away from their normal flight paths and migratory routes, create a barrier to migration, cause the birds to use more energy, and lead to collisions with wind turbines and bird deaths. Submissions also mentioned the cumulative impacts of offshore wind farms around Australia on bird mortality particularly for migratory species. Many submissions requested more research into how migratory birds use the area, and how offshore wind turbines may impact them.

“The potential impacts of offshore wind development on native birds have not been tested in an Australian context. The siting and operation of these projects must not come at the expense of biodiversity.” (BirdLife Australia, #13272)

Submissions raised concerns about the impacts to dolphins, sharks, fish, lobsters and other marine wildlife, including potential impacts on their habitats and complex ecosystems. The movement of boats in the area during construction, operation and maintenance was seen as potentially introducing invasive species. Submissions raised that marine life already contends with plastic pollution, noise pollution, boats, illegal fishing and overfishing, without adding offshore wind farms.

Many submissions mentioned the importance of implementing best practice mitigation measures to avoid and manage environmental impacts such as noise monitoring and monitoring for whales prior to the commencement of construction.

Electro-magnetic fields (EMF) from undersea cables were mentioned in some submissions with concern that EMF would interfere with the migration of whales and cause issues with other marine life such as fish and sharks.

Submissions were also concerned with the proximity to sensitive locations such as Bushrangers Bay, Lake Illawarra, Five Islands Nature Reserve, Windang Beach, Killalea National Surfing Reserve and Bass Point; and for species moving between Royal National Park and Jervis Bay Marine Park.

Some submissions were concerned that while offshore wind was being developed to protect the environment by addressing climate change, construction and operation associated with the offshore industry would impact the marine environment. There was concern regarding the resources, such as rare earth minerals, and energy required for the construction of offshore wind turbines and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. Submissions also considered the risk of damage to the environment and pollution from offshore renewable energy infrastructure was high in comparison to the overall benefits. Some submissions considered that the benefits of fossil fuel usage outweigh the drawbacks from offshore wind turbines. There was a concern that the government needed to balance the need for renewable energy with environmental protection.

Submissions raised concerns that the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of offshore wind farms would negatively impact the environment. During construction there were concerns about pollution, damage to the sea floor from drilling or installing concrete footings and the impact on whales and other marine life and the seabed. During operation, there were concerns about: noise and vibration impacting whales under the water and impacting residents on the shore; anchor systems and mooring lines for floating wind turbines scouring the seabed; oil leaks and spills; fires; corrosion and rust; the risk of failure; collision with ships; impact of storms and debris from offshore wind farms on the

environment; and lighting. The constant maintenance required in sea conditions and the amount of fuel that would be used by boats during maintenance was also mentioned.

Submissions raised questions on how wind turbines would be handled at their end of lives: how they would be decommissioned, how they would be disposed of and whether they could be recycled. Fears that turbine infrastructure would fail, be abandoned by companies, and left floating in the ocean or dumped onshore or in landfill and not recycled, were raised in these submissions. The importance of waste management plans to manage any waste was raised by local councils.

Some submissions referenced the failure of an experimental wave generator previously installed on the Illawarra coast in relation to these concerns. A similar type of concern was the risk that offshore turbines could be destroyed by extreme storm conditions that periodically occur off the Illawarra coast. Specific weather events mentioned in submissions included east coast lows and offshore tornados or waterspouts.

"This area is known for damaging east coast lows that create significant damage and destroy major infrastructure." (Submission #6380)

"I am concerned we will be left with rusty heaps of junk if this fails. The wave generator at Port Kembla is a good example of this." (Submission #5635)

There were concerns regarding the lack of information about where the transmission from any offshore wind farm will connect onto land, the impact of the installation and trenching of subsea transmission cables on sea grasses and marine life, and the potential disruption of contaminated sediments. Some submissions stated that developers should be required to use shared transmission infrastructure.

Some submissions raised concerns regarding the impacts of the presence of an offshore wind farm on local wind speeds. There were concerns that the wind turbines may reduce the strength of the cooling coastal sea breeze and reduce wind speeds down wind of the turbines and therefore affect land temperatures and paragliders at Bald Hill. There were also concerns regarding disruption to ocean currents, waves, swell patterns, sand movement, beach erosion and therefore activities such as surfing.

Visual amenity concerns

The impact of offshore wind farms projects on the visual amenity of the region was a prominent concern raised throughout consultation. A total of 9425 (66%) submissions mentioned the impact of the proposed offshore wind area on visual amenity as a concern.

Many submissions talked about the natural beauty of the Illawarra region including the beautiful beaches and coastline and the views from the escarpment. The significance of the ocean to the community was also frequently mentioned.

Submissions noted that offshore wind farms were seen as ugly, man-made structures that would create visual pollution, detract from the natural beauty of the Illawarra coastline and ruin the spectacular views. Many submissions outlined concerns that the presence of offshore wind turbines from Wombarra to Kiama will "industrialise the ocean" and destroy the pristine beauty of the ocean and coastline of the area. There were concerns that the visibility of the turbines from the Illawarra escarpment had not been considered.

"For the Illawarra coastline, the beauty of the escarpment being so close to the ocean is our main asset. From the beautiful bald hill, sea cliff bridge, down to Sandon point and Mount Keira lookout. I believe wind farms would be an eye sore, and destroy the outlook from these beautiful locations, impacting residents and tourists alike. Please don't bring wind farms to our coasts." (Submission #6487)

Many submissions considered that the proposed area at 10km from shore was too close. Some submissions suggested it should be at a minimum of 20km from the coast, while others suggested a minimum of 30km offshore. Others did not want to see them at all and did not think that the Illawarra was an appropriate location. Some submissions stated that additional money should be spent to put them further off the coast.

"I can see the necessity because we must limit climate change, but would desperately hope the size of the turbines would be as small as possible, as far from land as feasible, and be built only if studies show that the impact on the ocean's creatures, can be minimised." (Submission #14148)

Some respondents felt that offshore wind turbines were too big and would be visible from the shore and that the height of any infrastructure should be limited to address visual impacts. Concern was also expressed in some submissions that the visual impact of an offshore wind farm would impact on coastal property prices and tourism in the area, as discussed further in the community concerns section.

Many submissions raised concerns about light pollution at night and discussed the loss of dark sky views from coastal lookouts and headlands. There were also concerns regarding the presence of wind turbines at sunrise and moonrise, and concerns about red flashing lights on the wind turbines.

It was recommended by some submissions that future projects should provide visualisations from both the shoreline and the escarpment.

Commercial and recreational fishing concerns

A total of 8,945 (64%) submissions raised concerns about fishing. Submissions were received from representative bodies for game, charter and commercial fishing including the Charter Fishing Working Group NSW, NSW Game Fishing Association, Game Fishing Association of Australia, Professional Fishers Association, NSW Seafood Industry Council, and Seafood Industry Australia. Concerns were also identified in submissions by Wollongong Fishermen's Co-operative Limited and Sydney Fish Markets, and by local commercial fishing operators and game fishing clubs. Specific concerns were identified for the royal red prawn fishery, as a highly localised fishery concentrated in the region.

The primary concern raised in relation to fishing was exclusion zones around the proposed area, or around offshore wind turbines, limiting access for recreational and commercial fishers. Many submissions considered that offshore wind would reduce fishery stocks. Others considered that offshore wind infrastructure may serve as fishery aggregation devices (FADs) but they were concerned that the exclusion zones around turbines would negate any benefit. Several submissions noted that the FAD effect of increased abundance within exclusion zones would have negative outcomes for fishers if fishers were excluded from these areas.

Submissions also considered that offshore wind would destroy the local recreational and commercial fishing industry. Some submissions noted that affected businesses should be compensated for any impacts to their business. Submissions from representative bodies also noted the need to recognise existing user rights and provide compensation for the broader supply chain and industry due to the overall loss of available area and catch.

Submissions also raised concerns on environmental matters as they related to fish and fishing. Concerns were raised for matters such as changes to sedimentation due to offshore wind turbine installation, disruption to marine life from vibrations, destruction of natural habitat from pollution, and general concern for unknown detrimental effects on marine stock. Submissions identified that these matters could have negative impacts on fish and other marine species, which in turn would impact on fishing.

“What impact will the vibration have on the marine life? It could potentially drive away marine life from our coastline which would have a massive environmental impact”. (Submission #1345)

Representative bodies raised concerns about the economic impact on existing fishing rights and licences, and the impact on the supply of seafood to the local fisherman’s co-operatives and Sydney Fish Markets. Submissions recommended that any proposal for offshore wind must ensure the ongoing supply of local seafood. It was also noted that offshore wind could have a cumulative impact on a sector already under pressure from marine parks, oil and gas infrastructure, and the effects of climate change. Representative bodies emphasised the need for their sectors to be recognised as key stakeholders in consideration of offshore wind in their submissions, noting also the difficulty and costs associated with providing input into that consultation, and stating that they would require funding to engage appropriately.

“The Proposed Illawarra Region Offshore Windfarm proposal must be considered in a wider context, having regard to the production and supply of sustainable seafood to Australian consumers...” (NSW Seafood Industry Council, #13067)

“The Illawarra/Wollongong region supplies around 500 tonnes of seafood to Sydney Fish Market annually, to the value of approximately \$6m” (Sydney Fish Market, #9609)

Specific concerns were raised in relation to the game and charter fishing sectors, noting in addition to the concerns discussed above that their industry also falls within the tourism sector, and would be negatively impacted by any reduction in tourist numbers as a result of offshore wind development. It was also stated that the proposed area overlaps with the location of FADs installed by the NSW Government.

“The Illawarra wind farm will be only 10km from shore off Wombarra down to approximately Shellharbour and then out to 30km off Kiama. This is right in the middle of where our members fish and also run tournaments.” (NSW Game Fishing Association Inc, #10668)

Community concerns

A total of 9726 (68%) submissions raised concerns relating to the community. Submissions concerns for impacts on the tourism industry and local economy, property prices, community amenity, and the mental and physical health of the local community.

Many respondents felt that First Nations people have a deep connection to the land and a wealth of knowledge and their active involvement and consent is necessary and important throughout the decision making process for the transition to renewable energy generation to be a success. It was a concern for the community that the First Nations people might miss out on the benefits that the rest of the community stood to gain from offshore renewables and that the government needed to ensure that doesn’t happen.

“It is crucial to consider the perspectives and concerns of these Indigenous communities, as their wisdom and traditional knowledge can provide valuable insights into the potential impacts of such projects on the environment and cultural heritage. Meaningful engagement with these communities should be a fundamental aspect of the decision-making process, ensuring that their rights, values, and heritage are respected and protected throughout the development of the offshore wind farm.” (Submission #5080)

Tourism and local economy concerns

Many respondents identified concerns to tourism to the Illawarra, with particular emphasis on the popularity of the regions beaches, on water tourism industries such as whale watching, charter fishing and scuba diving, the value of the escarpment for hang gliding and paragliding, and the visual appeal of views over the coast and out to sea. Submissions raised concerns that the tourist industry would be threatened by

the development of offshore wind and listed concerns about potential visual impacts, changes to surf conditions, impacts to whales, game fish species and other marine life. Respondents stated that if tourists were deterred from visiting the region, this would have economic impacts for both the tourism sector directly, and for supporting businesses in the region.

“The imposing presence of wind turbines may alter the picturesque views that attract tourists, directly impacting the tourism sector and the countless jobs linked to our tourism industry.” (Submission #14184)

Whale watching was identified as a popular tourist activity in many submissions that could be impacted by an offshore wind farm. Many of the respondents were concerned about the impact to migratory whales, birds and fish and the subsequent impact to the tourism sector.

Other submissions raised concerns of potential impacts on surf conditions and onshore wind patterns, and how these would impact on surfing and hang-gliding/paragliding businesses.

A common theme in submissions was that the Illawarra region has been working to transition from its identity as the ‘Steel City’ and move to a more diversified economy with a tourism focus, and that this could be threatened by the development of an offshore wind industry. Respondents were concerned that the job losses in the tourism and fishing sectors would outweigh any new jobs created from the development of offshore wind.

Some submissions were concerned that developers would import construction materials and an experienced workforce rather than investing in the local region. Other respondents were concerned about available housing and services for an increased workforce associated with the establishment of an offshore wind industry in the region.

Health impacts

Some submissions also raised concerns about the potential for offshore wind to have negative health outcomes for the Illawarra community. Concerns were largely focused on the mental health impacts, with respondents identifying the important role of the beach and ocean to improving their own mental health, and the potential for offshore wind to diminish the beneficial effects.

“Locals and tourists treat the ocean as a sacred place for peace and reflection. We do not want anything obstructing that view.” (Submission #13178)

Other submissions raised concerns about potential physical health impacts from offshore wind and the associated onshore infrastructure, focusing on the potential disruption caused by noise and vibration, and from electromagnetic fields associated with high voltage electricity transmission infrastructure.

Onshore impacts and transmission concerns

Onshore transmission and associated infrastructure were identified as areas of concern by some submissions. Where the power generated by offshore wind would be used was also raised by some submissions.

Respondents were concerned that the transmission infrastructure required to transport power from an offshore wind project would have negative environmental impacts where it crossed the coast. Concerns were raised that new transmission corridors would also be required to connect to new or existing onshore substations, and that these corridors would have negative visual and environmental impacts, and may exclude residents from beaches where cables cross.

Many submissions felt concerned that there was no information on what routes onshore transmission cables would take and where they would connect and considered that prospective developers had identified possible transmission routes in advance of any area being declared or licences issued. Respondents identified particular concerns for any possible transmission routes crossing Lake Illawarra.

Respondents were concerned that power generated by offshore wind in the Illawarra would not benefit local communities if the power would be sent elsewhere. Many submissions considered that any power generated had already been earmarked for the Port Kembla steelworks or a future hydrogen production industry. Others identified concerns that as power would connect to the national grid, it would not be used to power households in the Illawarra. A small number of respondents were concerned that the power generated would be sent overseas.

Some respondents felt that the Illawarra region would not be able to accommodate the projected population influx associated with offshore wind construction and operations, identifying particular concerns for the capacity of healthcare and educational services, housing availability, and the quality of public roads if there were sudden significant population increases.

Several organisations that made submissions identified the need for coordinated planning of the offshore and onshore aspects of onshore wind and clear policies from the NSW State government as the relevant onshore planning authority, in order to avoid or minimise impacts to communities.

“Recommendation 8: The government must build publicly owned transmission infrastructure from the grid to a shared connection point at an offshore substation. Projects in the Area should be required to cooperate on the use of shared infrastructure with an appropriate mechanism to allocate costs, risks, ownership, and control.” (CFMMEU and ETU, #13428)

Social licence

The lack of social licence for offshore wind in the Illawarra was a common theme in submissions expressing concern. Many respondents noted that to gain any form of social licence, offshore wind must clearly set out how it will benefit the Illawarra, such as through clear commitments to local employment, material such as Port Kembla steel, the establishment of community benefit funds, and better communication of how social and environmental impacts will be considered, avoided or managed.

“A social license is essential for the acceptance and viability of a significant project such as this in our region. Without being prescriptive, this must include a combination of satisfying local environmental considerations and direct economic benefit in terms of a community dividend to our region as hosts of these technologies.” (South Coast Labour Council, #12108)

Other submissions considered there was no social licence for offshore wind and that development should not proceed in its absence.

Other concerns or issues

More than 7,100 submissions (approximately 50%) identified a range of other concerns related to shipping, aviation, defence, alternate energy and other.

The safety of shipping and navigation, and the impact of offshore wind on existing shipping routes were common concerns. Submissions identified the potential for offshore wind turbines to be hazards for shipping to and from Port Kembla, and for vessels seeking to transit through the area, such as commercial and recreational fishers. Some respondents were concerned that ships travelling to and from Port Kembla would

be required to transit inshore of the proposed area, coming closer to the coast where they would be at increased risk of grounding, or conversely be forced further out to sea in the event of extreme weather.

“To avoid anchor dragging problems ships often head out to sea when an extreme gale force wind is predicted - these ships will be required to take a circuitous [route] around the wind farm field to reach the safety of deep water.” (Submission #9326)

Respondents were concerned there would be particular hazards during fog or other periods of low visibility, where there is an increased reliance on radar and navigational systems. Submissions identified that these systems could be disrupted by offshore turbines. Some submissions noted that the route of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race transits through the proposed area.

Potential risks for low-flying aircraft were also raised as a concern, in particular risks to military flights and flights in and out of Shellharbour Airport. Other types of military concerns were also raised in submissions, including the risk that offshore wind farms could be a target for terrorist attacks, could hinder the development of a potential submarine base at Port Kembla, or even become a hiding place for hypothetical enemy submarines.

Some submissions raised concerns about the economics and financing of offshore wind. Respondents expressed concern that offshore wind is too expensive to build, maintain and operate. Submissions characterised offshore wind as costly, unreliable, only available when the wind blows, and referenced overseas project failures to question the financial viability of offshore wind.

Non-fossil fuel alternative energy as preferable to offshore wind was raised by some submissions. Another technology-related concern raised by submissions was the risk that rapid technological developments could render offshore wind turbines obsolete.

“Solar energy production is a fraction of the cost of wind and the advancement in battery storage technology makes it increasingly more practical and more affordable. On shore wind generation is cheaper than offshore if required to supplement solar” (Submission #12168)

Submissions were also concerned that offshore wind infrastructure may be owned by foreign companies, and the foreign manufacturer and supply of offshore wind turbines and infrastructure. Many submissions expressed the opinion that foreign interests would benefit more from offshore wind than Australian communities and companies.

Expressions of concern about the public consultation process itself were also found in many submissions. Submissions raised concerns about various aspects of the consultation process, including the view that there was a lack of information, lack of First Nations consultation, insufficient publicity and notice periods for the drop-in sessions, insufficient overall consultation time, and the view that the entire process was merely a ‘box-ticking’ exercise to give legitimacy to a predetermined outcome.

“There’s too much money at stake for the government and private firms to scrap this plan: I fear this consultation exercise is just a box ticking exercise.” (Submission #2660)

However, other submissions expressed the view that voices opposed to offshore wind were amplified in the broader public discourse during the consultation period. Some submissions raised concerns that the government’s public consultation process could favour demographic groups likely to oppose offshore wind, and particularly a concern that young people’s voices were likely to go unheard.

“International evidence suggests that young adults’ attitudes towards renewable energy differ from older generations, yet they tend to be under-represented in community consultation.” (Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society & Space, University of Wollongong, #12041)

Some submissions also raised concerns that deliberate, organised disinformation and misinformation campaigns were publicising lies with the aim of stopping offshore wind. Submissions noted social media

posts with inducements, including offers of payment, to make submissions opposing offshore wind. Some submissions raised concerns about personal attacks on academics and other experts in related fields who support offshore wind.

"There is a lot of disinformation circulating regarding impacts of wind farms to whales, but absolutely no credible proof suggesting it is true. Climate change, ocean acidification, and shipping are far greater threats to whales" (Nature Conservation Council of NSW, #13182)

"While there has been significant amounts of misinformation about the potential environmental impacts of offshore wind in the Illawarra, at the core communities want to understand the potential impacts and ensure their region is protected." (Friends of the Earth, #13679)

Submissions also revealed a widespread misunderstanding that the consultation process was about a specific offshore wind farm project. Submissions complaining about the lack of detailed, concrete information about "the wind farm" illustrated this misconception. Some submissions expressed the view that a lack of project-specific details undermined trust in the government's intentions and ability to act in the best interests of the Illawarra community. There were concerns that offshore wind was being forced onto the Illawarra by outsiders.

There were also submissions questioning why the Illawarra was chosen as a location and why there were no proposals near Sydney's Eastern Suburbs or Northern Beaches. Other submissions questioned the need for offshore wind at all, suggesting instead more onshore wind development in areas with low population densities.

"Why place them off the coast of Wollongong? Why not place them in Sydney Harbour or off Bondi Beach?" (Submission #7041)

Appendix A: Submissions from organisations representing others

While a significant proportion of submissions were made by individuals, approximately 53 submissions were made by organisations or groups on behalf of the group and their members. Information on those who made public submissions, whether they were supportive or opposed, and approximate numbers of their members are detailed below.

Organisations supportive of the proposal

The following organisations made public submissions on behalf of their members supporting this proposal. The approximate number of members they represent is also provided below:

- Australian Workers' Union – approx. 75,000 members
- Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining, and Energy Union (CFMMEU), Electrical Trades Union (ETU) & Maritime Union Australia (MUA) – approx. 260,000 members combined
- South Coast Labour Council – approx. 50,000 members
- NSW Teachers Federation – approx. 65,000 members
- Professionals Australia – approx. 20,000 members
- Unions Shoalhaven – approx. 600,000+ members
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition – approx. 120,000 members
- i3net (Illawarra Innovative Industry Network) – 20,000 members
- Business Illawarra – approx. 27,000 businesses
- Australian Parents for Climate Action – approx. 17,000 members
- Strathfield Mens Shed – approx. 1,200 members
- Doctors for the Environment Australia – approx. 920 members
- Vets for Climate Action – approx. 2000+ members
- Mudgee District Environment Group – approx. 60,000 members
- Electrify Adelaide – approx. 500 households
- Illawarra Knitting Nannas Against Greed – approx. 950 members

The following organisations also made public submissions on behalf of their members supporting this proposal. The number of members they represent is not known. These include:

- Mt Kembla/Unanderra Branch of NSW Labor
- Illawarra Greens
- Thirroul Labor Party
- Sutherland Shire Climate Action Network
- Rewiring Australia
- Climate Action Burwood/Canada Bay
- Healthy Cities Illawarra
- CLEANaS
- Good for the Gong
- Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle
- Older Men: New Ideas (OM:NI)
- ACF Shoalhaven
- Ipswich Climate Action Group
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance
- Diplomats for Climate Action Ltd
- Labor Environment Action Network (LEAN)
- Good For The Hood

- Renew Illawarra
- Peoples Climate Assembly
- RE-Alliance
- Illawarra Greens
- Hi Neighbour
- National Parks Association of NSW (Illawarra Branch)

Organisations opposed to the proposal

The following organisations made public submissions on behalf of their members opposing this proposal. The approximate number of members they represent is also provided below:

- Shellharbour Game Fishing Club – approx. 90 members
- Kiama Game Fishing Club - approx. 2611+ members
- No Offshore Wind Farms – Illawarra – approx. 4,000+ members
- Illawarra Birders and SOSSA – approx. 100 members
- Beach Care Illawarra – approx. 1200+ members

The following organisations also made public submissions on behalf of their members opposing this proposal. The number of members they represent is not known. These include:

- United Fishing Organisation
- The Game Fishing Association of Australia Inc
- MotVind UK
- New South Wales Game Fishing Association Inc.
- Seacliff Concierge
- Coomadictchie United Aboriginal Corporation

Organisations neither supportive or opposed

The following organisations also made public submissions noting concerns but were neither supportive nor opposed. The number of members they represent are not known. These include:

- National Trust of Australia (NSW) Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch
- BirdLife Southern NSW