

Environment, planning and consultation process



The Star of the South is Australia's first proposed offshore wind project. Located between 10 and 25 kilometres off the south coast of Gippsland, the Star of the South would be able to power an estimated 1.2 million homes at its full capacity, providing a reliable, consistent and environmentally-friendly source of energy for Victoria.



The planning process

The project has been in development since 2012 and a range of detailed, preliminary investigations have already been completed. These investigations assessed important environmental and technical aspects for the project.

More detailed investigations will continue on land and at sea, to help

confirm if it is feasible to construct and operate an offshore wind farm off the south coast of Gippsland.

As these investigations occur, the project will be subject to Victorian and Commonwealth Government requirements, which includes developing work plans and regular reporting to government.



Environmental assessment process

Environmental assessment and approvals form an important part of any major project. A key factor in selecting the proposed site was to ensure it has minimal impact on sensitive environmental areas like internationally-protected RAMSAR sites and flora and fauna.

Once it's confirmed the project is feasible and able to proceed, there will be extensive and detailed environmental assessment processes under Victorian and Commonwealth legislation.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places — defined in the EPBC Act as matters of national environmental significance.

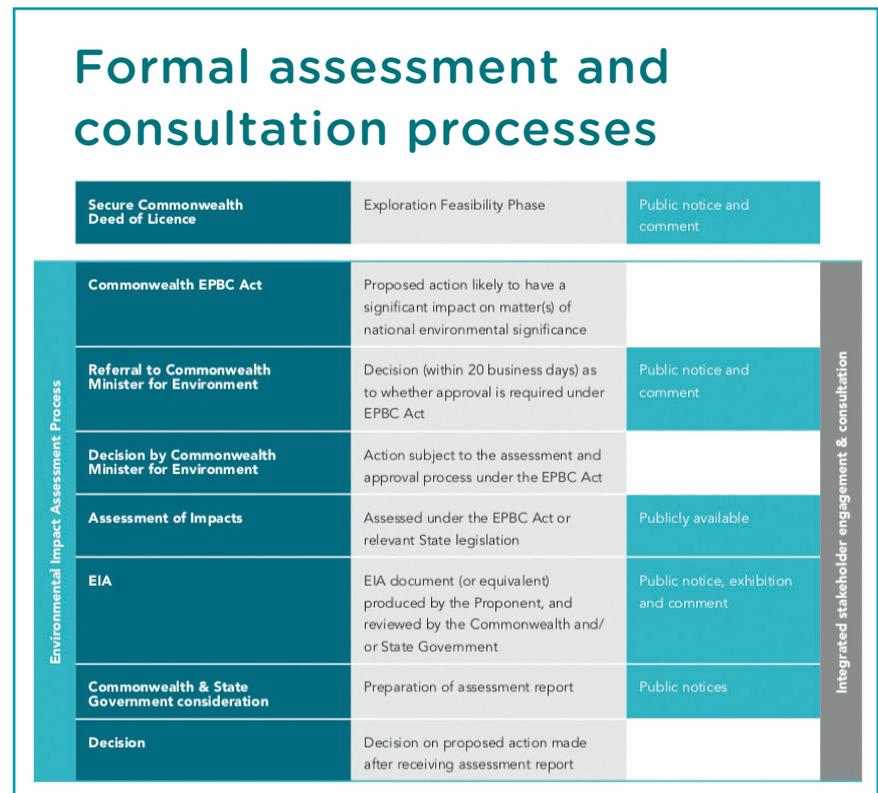
Under the Act, projects that have the potential to impact matters of national environmental significance need to be referred to the Minister for Environment and Energy, who will then decide if the project becomes a 'controlled action'.

The project must also consider and

comply with relevant State legislation which may include the Environment Effects Act 1978 in Victoria, which is an assessment process that enables statutory decision-makers (Ministers, local government and statutory authorities) to make decisions about whether a project with potentially significant environmental effects should proceed.

It assesses the impacts or likely 'effects' of a project while also identifying possible measures to avoid, mitigate or minimise these effects.

These assessment processes place strict requirements on projects, including extensive consultation with local communities and stakeholders.



Community and stakeholder involvement

The Star of the South project is founded on a belief that involving communities early is critical to developing a good project. The project team has been meeting with locals since early 2017, well ahead of any formal requirement to consult and to ensure that the project respects the local community and works with it to deliver a world-class project.

Formal approval and compliance processes will set out minimum periods for notification, display and feedback during the planning and development phase of the project. There are also various stages at which formal public submissions can be made, in addition to expert submissions from a range of government and regulatory bodies.

The project team will continue

to keep local communities and stakeholders informed throughout the project's development. In addition to the consultation that will take place as part of environmental and planning approval processes, the project team will meet regularly with locals to discuss opportunities and concerns regarding things like local jobs, industry involvement and port development.

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