

# Minutes

## Community Advisory Group meeting #17

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4:00pm – 6:00pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2023-02-08
Location	RW May Pavilion, Yarram Recreation Reserve		

## Attendance

Members		Project team		Apologies	
Ian Gibson	Tony Cantwell		Sarah Altmann		Marcus McKenzie
Allan Rogers	Glen McColl		Paul Johnson		Jess Lee
Glenn Stagg	Deb Lucas		Julia Preston		Darren McCubbin
Tony Wolfe	Jonathan Pintus		Jason Pickering		Erin Coldham
Peter Mooney	Travis Dillow				
Harry Mitchelson	Wendy Farmer				
Anne Roussac-Hoyne	Jack Winterbottom				
Julianne Peavey	Michelle Isles (attending for Darren McCubbin)				
Nicki Jennings					
Jenny Smith					

## Key discussion points

Item	Discussion points
1	<b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b>
2	<b>Standing items and actions from previous meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Apologies</li> <li>– Endorsement of minutes from CAG meeting #16</li> <li>– Declaration of potential conflicts of interest</li> </ul>
3	<b>Introducing Star of the South team member</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Paul Johnson, Regional Engagement Manager</li> </ul>



Item	Discussion points
4	<p><b>What's happening on the project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Refer to <a href="#">presentation for key updates</a>.</li><li>- Questions and comments from the group:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Allan asked about the methods for surveying pelagic fish. Sarah advised eco-sounders are used to locate schools, then underwater cameras and line fishing used to capture data on species. <a href="#">Action – Jason will provide more detail in writing</a>.</li><li>- Wendy asked if government is leading any environmental studies. Sarah answered that Star of the South is undertaking its own baseline studies to ensure location-specific data for environmental assessments and project planning.</li><li>- Glenn asked if seabed studies are on the project's critical timeline. Sarah advised that, while important, there are other activities driving the critical path.</li><li>- Allan asked if the seabed studies are needed for the project's Feasibility Licence application. Sarah answered no, they're important for project design and procurement.</li><li>- Michelle asked if challenges sourcing a suitable vessel for the seabed studies is due to competition from other proponents. Sarah answered no, other offshore wind projects are not at this advanced stage so it's more about current capabilities of domestically available vessels.</li><li>- A previous suggestion from Tony W to check in on the project timeline each meeting was discussed and supported by the group.</li><li>- Allan asked if we would consider installing one demonstration turbine to show people and study changes to the seafloor, fish and environment. Sarah advised this would require a separate licence and approvals and that the project team is focused on the proposed Star of the South project to meet the need for large-scale energy to the grid this decade. There is existing data to draw from on the effects of structure in the ocean, including from offshore wind farms globally and offshore oil and gas projects locally.</li></ul></li></ul>
5	<p><b>What's happening in the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Anne Roussac-Hoyne<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Anne introduced herself to the group as the new member for Foster and district.</li></ul></li><li>- Jonathan Pintus<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There are a number of community events coming up in Toora: Heritage Pear Festival and the Toora Town Triathlon.</li><li>- Other offshore wind project developers are starting to hold local events to share information about their proposed projects.</li><li>- Locals are interested in where turbines will be manufactured.</li></ul></li><li>- Updates from the group:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Nicki noted that Wendy is brokering a meeting with an advisor to the State Energy Minister to visit the Giffard area to talk about government managed transmission.</li><li>- Julianne added she is hearing that many Seaspray residents are concerned about visual effects of offshore wind off the coastline in that area.</li><li>- Peter shared that the closing of white paper production at the Maryvale Paper Mill will affect around 230 people. This is another significant impact on employment</li></ul></li></ul>

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	<p>within Gippsland and will put further pressure on the wider local economy with a reduction in community spending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tony C added that Latrobe Valley Authority is preparing a Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan to navigate the future of the region as it undergoes significant change. The plan will set out a shared vision for the community in 2035. The draft transition plan can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>– Ian attended a webinar on Legislating Australia's Wind Future: Offshore Wind Forum, which included a session on the Gippsland renewable energy transition. Cumulative impacts of multiple projects and transmission were key discussion points along with the wider community not distinguishing between proponents.</li> <li>– Glen said Latrobe City Council is identifying capabilities already existing in the area for the renewable energy transition. There is a focus to get local businesses in front of the right people and would like to discuss with Star of the South.</li> <li>– Michelle shared that the Gippsland Climate Change Network is working on a 'one-stop-shop' website to show the whole picture of new energy development in Gippsland and invited people to be part of the coordination group involved. <a href="#">CAG members can also contact Jason to connect with Michelle if interested.</a></li> </ul>
6	Break
7	<p><b>Focus topic: Recent government announcements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sarah provided an overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The site declaration and changes that resulted from government consultation</li> <li>– Feasibility Licence application process</li> <li>– Major Project Status – what does this mean for Star of the South</li> <li>– 2023 look ahead – key priorities for the project</li> </ul> <p>The slides can be accessed <a href="#">here</a></p> </li> <li>– Questions from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Nicki asked if the introduction of a 10 km coastal buffer was a shock to Star of the South. Sarah replied that it didn't come as a huge surprise, as there was a lot of feedback about the proximity of turbines to the shore.</li> <li>– Jonathan asked if the buffer covers all infrastructure. Sarah answered that it's relevant to the licence area and anything within in – including turbines and substations. Transmission cables will still be needed to connect projects to the shore within the 10 km buffer.</li> <li>– Nicki asked what this means for Star of the South. Sarah advised that a sliver of the project's current Exploration Licence area is not within the Declared Area. This means we can't apply for a Feasibility Licence for that area or seek to develop it in future.</li> <li>– Allan asked how wide the area removed from the Exploration Licence area is. Sarah answered it varies from 0-3 km.</li> <li>– Jonathan asked has the interactive map been adjusted to exclude turbines now located within the buffer zone. <a href="#">Action – question taken on notice. See end of minutes for response.</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Item	Discussion points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Jack asked how close other proposed projects are to Star of the South. Sarah answered that, based on those publicly announced, some are abutting.</li><li>– Anne asked if Star of the South has the best location within the declared area. Sarah advised that we believe this is an ideal location for offshore wind. It was selected for many reasons including wind conditions, proximity to ports and the grid, avoidance of sensitive environmental areas and other oil and gas infrastructure.</li><li>– Allan asked if turbines can be larger to reduce the number required to conserve space. Sarah answered that the project is looking at a range of turbines. Using larger turbines means you need fewer of them – but they also need more space around them.</li><li>– Glenn was surprised to learn that some of Star of the South’s Exploration Licence was not included in the Declared Area, especially given Major Project Status.</li><li>– Ian asked about the duration of a Feasibility Licence is. It is 7-years and can be extended if approved.</li><li>– Jonathan asked how the current turbine layout compares to overseas projects in terms of density and is there enough space in the remaining area to condense the layout and retain output. Sarah answered that density would vary and is likely to be very site-specific. The project is considering what changes through the site declaration mean for the project’s capacity, layout, and other aspects. The closer turbines are to one another, the greater likelihood of ‘wake’ effects which can reduce the efficiency of turbines.</li><li>– Ian asked about how much offshore wind energy the government wants and when. Sarah advised there are targets of 2GW by 2032, 4GW by 2035 and 9GW by 2040. What we don’t know now is how much energy they want to see from one project. This information is expected in the next Offshore Wind Implementation Statement 2.</li><li>– Glenn asked if Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners would pull their investment given the changes and uncertainty. Sarah answered that they have a track record of helping build new and challenging markets such as the USA and Taiwan. They’re looking for positive signals that there’s a future for the industry here to unlock more investment.</li><li>– Glenn asked what would happen if funding for Star of the South was stopped, could government’s targets still be achieved? Sarah advised that Star of the South is the most advanced project and is at least two years ahead. It could put the targets at risk.</li><li>– Nicki noted that Star of the South has been working for years on the project and contesting that area would be hard for a competitor. Wendy supported that it would be very difficult to compete with Star of the South for a newer proponent. Sarah noted that a lot of competition for licences is expected.</li><li>– Peter noted that coal power stations are planning their ramp down based on when new generation is expected and a delay in offshore wind could impact on those plans.</li><li>– Allan asked if Star of the South can showcase the company’s experience from overseas. Sarah answered that the strong track record and experience within Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners will form part of the licence application.</li></ul>

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	<p>Government wants to know that developers are reputable and have the ability to deliver on their commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Peter asked which department oversees the application process. Sarah answered the 'Offshore Infrastructure Registrar' within the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA).</li> <li>– Nicki asked when decisions will be made about Feasibility Licences. Sarah answered there is no set timeframe. It may depend on how many applicants, if there is overlap, and how complex the assessment becomes. It's the first time this has been done in Australia so it's hard to gauge what will come up.</li> <li>– Jenny asked if having Major Project Status will help with the Feasibility Licence application. Sarah replied that the licencing process is competitive with a level playing field. Major Project Status provides access to a facilitation service within government to help coordinate the many departments and levels involved in environmental assessments.</li> <li>– Glenn asked if the environment assessment process is on pause now. Sarah advised that the Feasibility Licence application is the top priority for now and all other work is taking a back seat temporarily. If the project doesn't achieve a Feasibility Licence it does not have a future.</li> <li>– Peter noted that VicGrid are planning a shared transmission line to avoid a 'spider-web' of transmission lines across Gippsland and asked if their work will affect Star of the South's proposed transmission. Sarah advised the project is talking with VicGrid to understand what their work means for us and we'll update the group as more information becomes available.</li> </ul>
8	<b>Other business</b>
9	<b>Meeting close</b>

## Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	Provide a link to the Latrobe Valley Authority website for viewing / feedback of the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland transition plan	Jason Pickering	15/2/23
2	Respond to questions unanswered or taken on notice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pelagic fish survey methods</li> <li>- Status of interactive map</li> <li>- Will other proponents get access to the data from environmental studies undertaken by Star of the South and if so, will that shorten their environmental study periods.</li> </ul>	Jason Pickering	16/02/23 16/02/23 16/03/23
3	Provide a link to the NOPTA website where the guidance for Feasibility Licence applicants is available	Jason Pickering	16/2/23

## Next meeting

Date	Time	Place
Thursday 30 March	4 - 6 pm	Venue TBC Latrobe Valley

## Questions taken on notice

### 1. How are the pelagic surveys completed.

We are undertaking pelagic fish studies to understand the age and numbers of fish in the project area. We are working with local operators in Tony Kemna (Far Out Charters) and Brian Spiteri (Port Albert Fishin' Charters). RPS and Deakin University representatives are undertaking the studies in the two separate vessels. Each are trialling two different survey methods, and both are using baited remote underwater video (BRUV)s. The teams will also each use echo sounders to find fish and understand how many there are, along with some line fishing to complement the other survey methods.

### 2. Has the interactive map been adjusted to exclude turbines now located within the buffer zone.

As we are currently applying for a Feasibility Licence to continue developing the project, we'll hold off on updating all interactive maps and images until the outcome of this is known, expected later this year.

Until then we have disabled this service on our website.