

# Minutes

## Community Advisory Group meeting #18

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4:00pm – 6:00pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2023-03-30
Location	Building 2 TAFE Gippsland, Collaboration Hub MOR.1.G-3 (to the left as you enter 'Main Entry') – Corner of Princes Drive & Monash Way, Morwell VIC 3840		

## Attendance

Members		Project team		Apologies	
Ian Gibson	Tony Cantwell	Erin Coldham		Anne Roussac-Hoyne	
Allan Rogers	Glen McColl	Paul Johnson		Jonathan Pintus	
Glenn Stagg	Darren McCubbin	Lachlan McKinnon		Jack Winterbottom	
Tony Wolfe	Travis Dillow	Jason Pickering			
Peter Mooney	Jenny Smith				
Wendy Farmer	Deb Lucas				
Marcus McKenzie	Harry Mitchelson				
Julianne Peavey	Nina Barry-Macaulay				
Nicki Jennings					
Jess Lee					

## 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 #17</li> <li>– Declaration of potential conflicts of interest</li> </ul>
3	<b>What's happening on the project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Refer to presentation for key updates.</li> <li>– Questions and comments from the group:</li> </ul>

Item	Discussion points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Erin reported that the Pelagic Fish Survey was completed during February, this study was suggested by Harry Mitchelson. We will release the findings after further analysis of the collected data.</li> <li>– The State Government has released Offshore Wind Implementation Statement 2 in early March – detailing a market sounding process for proponents and declaring the Port of Hastings as its preferred construction hub for the offshore wind industry. The Gippsland ports are not currently deep enough for the large construction vessels, we are keeping them in mind, but more so with a view towards the operations and maintenance phase of our project.</li> <li>– The Victorian Government has promoted VicGrid to lead and coordinate transmission planning and they will soon begin a consultation process.</li> <li>– The Victorian Government is continuing to investigate opportunities for workforce and supply chain development and will continue to explore fast-tracking regulatory processes.</li> <li>– Paul spoke of the positive sentiment at the two Star of the South supporter events held in Yarram and Morwell respectively and how this will support our upcoming Feasibility Licence application. He also reported on our involvement in recent Job expo events in Leongatha and Morwell.</li> <li>– Lachlan reported on our 2-day attendance at the VFA Ultimate Fishing Expo in February at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre and how it provided an important opportunity for fisher engagement.</li> <li>– Erin reported on presentations to the IPA Energy Symposium and also the Ocean Business Leaders’ Summit. Wendy and Tony W who also attended the Ocean Business Leaders’ Summit reaffirmed the number of competing stakeholders. They were surprised that the urgency of energy transition was not fully appreciated by all at a national level, with many thinking it will just happen. There were discussions about how individual projects can be ‘nature positive’ and need to work together collaboratively to support habitat restoration and positive initiatives for the ocean at scale. <b>Action:</b> A white paper will be released from the Ocean Business Leaders’ Summit, and we will share this with the CAG when it becomes available.</li> <li>– Erin summarised that our Feasibility Licence Application will be submitted by April 27. This competitive process is critical to Star of the South continuing as a project. We don’t know the exact number of other proponents that may enter an application, we have heard around 30. Results should be known later this year. Glenn S mentioned that we are not seeing much in the way of community engagement from other potential proponents at this stage. Erin added that work done to date is not an application criterion, you are able to state what your engagement plan would be if you got a licence. Some parties may simply speak of work completed elsewhere in the world as an example. Glen McC added this is consistent with other proponents that have already contacted Latrobe City Council.</li> <li>– Ian asked if there is anything that the CAG can do as a group to support the application? Erin said there is no obligation for the CAG to do anything, but it may be appropriate if an accompanying letter was submitted on behalf of the CAG,</li> </ul>



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	<p>explaining its role in enabling engagement and information sharing within the wider community.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ian proposed to draft a bespoke CAG letter to be circulated among the group for comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erin spoke of our upcoming seabed studies, an offshore geotechnical campaign to take some core samples on location to help with the future design of the project. This work should commence late April when the vessel arrives.</li> <li>- Workforce mapping and local supply chain reports are continuing within our team and will be presented to CAG as a future feature topic when ready.</li> <li>- Tony W asked whether the results in studies that are co-funded by Government, are shared with other proponents. Erin answered that we have a knowledge sharing agreement in place in these situations – the information can be used by Government to assist with industry planning and decision making, but there is a confidentiality period over its wider release to protect our interests and intellectual property where required.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>What’s happening in the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nina Barry-Macaulay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nina updated on South Gippsland Shire Council’s advocacy for the offshore wind industry more broadly, including a visit to Canberra by council representatives who met with ministerial advisors - promoting local opportunities for infrastructure development and training, along with investment potential in agriculture, and primary production in this area.</li> <li>- Ian asked of any collaboration with Latrobe City Council and Wellington Shire Council. Nina indicated Council is having regular conversations and wants to see benefit for Gippsland as a whole.</li> <li>- Erin suggested that an introduction could be made between Nina and South Gippsland Shire Council and the Star of the South - Ports and Harbours Package Manager.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Jason to facilitate an introduction between Nina and Michael Dillon.</p> </li> <li>- Tony Cantwell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tony presented at the Enlit Australia convention in Melbourne that focuses on Australia’s energy transition and highlighted the need for collaboration between all regions that are transitioning around the country as their needs will be similar.</li> <li>- An Indigenous workshop held in Sale as part of the GROW program was a great success – it focused on best practice ways to provide pathways into industry for indigenous workers.</li> <li>- A recent refresh of the Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Masterplan has looked at existing road, rail, and ports infrastructure in Gippsland and how that may be further developed to play a role in emergent industries such as offshore wind.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Updates from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Darren added that Mark Wakeham, Churchill Fellowship, will be coming to the Morwell Innovation Centre on the 17 May to talk about his learned experience of energy transition in Europe and will apply this to a Gippsland context.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Darren also shared that Gippsland New Energy Conference is coming up at the Wedge in Sale, 31 August – 1 September. An event that brings leaders and innovators together to shape the future of energy generation in Gippsland.</li> <li>- Wendy shared that there will be a Renewable Energy Jobs Expo held in Traralgon on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of October focusing on where the jobs will occur in the new industry. Day 1 has an education and school's attendee focus and day 2 will be open to the wider public.</li> <li>- Glenn McC shared Latrobe City Council is also exploring local manufacturing and supply chain capabilities to support energy transition in the region.</li> </ul>
5	Break
6	<p><b>Focus topic: Transmission Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erin provided an overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The State Government has reiterated its commitment to have a coordinated approach to transmission and VicGrid will lead this process. It makes sense to share infrastructure where possible and limit the number of transmission lines required for multiple projects sharing a region.</li> <li>- We are aware that this process could now create a lot of confusion for landholders, who we have already had a lot of conversations with over the last 5 years. We believe we have identified a good solution towards transmission and are now undertaking discussions with Government to see if we can share our knowledge and assist to get the best outcome for all.</li> <li>- Timing is one of the challenges now faced by VicGrid to be ready when projects want to come online. There has been positive acknowledgement of the work Star of the South has done from the community, with reference to the studies required for our EES and EIS requirements that are nearing completion. Star of the South faces the challenge of losing momentum, so we are continuing with our current approvals processes including a full transmission route to the Latrobe Valley.</li> <li>- We have offered to facilitate engagement and promote the VicGrid consultation with landholders identified on our proposed transmission route to help shape any proposed VicGrid processes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Questions from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nicki offered that there would be sorrow from residents of the Giffard and Darriman areas if Star of the South was pushed into using overhead transmission by Government when you have indicated you would be underground from the outset. It was this commitment that saw the project embraced strongly and early by the community. Erin added we have had conversations with all levels of Government to say that there is a lot of merit in underground transmission.</li> <li>- Wendy added VicGrid have not ruled out using the transmission plan preferred by Star of the South and would rely on community consultation and learnings gained from Star of the South and AusNet to shape their proposed plan.</li> <li>- Allan asked is there a chance that Star of the South would be made to change to above ground transmission and why wouldn't the Government just follow your advice on what is the best solution. Erin answered we have committed to below</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p>ground in our negotiations with landholders and we are not deviating from that. We can't speak for the Government, but the increased cost of underground transmission could be a factor, and this wouldn't be consistent across all projects – proposed distance of transmission, topography and capabilities of the infrastructure could vary greatly between projects and then so would that cost attributed to this process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We have articulated to Government that the feedback we have received from Gippsland communities is that underground remains the preference, and we support that.</li> <li>– Erin explained that offshore wind proponents would be required to bring infrastructure underground to the nearest connection point identified by Government and from there it would be up to Government as to how it is delivered to the Latrobe Valley.</li> <li>– Glenn asked is it still feasible to have a shared transmission route underground after all proponents have connected at the nearest connection point and will this be part of VicGrid's investigations. Erin answered yes this is essentially what happens in Europe. We will feed our learnings into VicGrid's consultation and would encourage others to do the same.</li> <li>– Ian closed the topic and offered that due to its great interest we will revisit it again at a future meeting.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Brief Update: Recreational fishing and boating engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lachlan provided an overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Why we're talking with fishers – To understand how the area is being used and to share project information and updates. We apply what we hear to inform the project's development, assessment and future planning for construction and operations.</li> <li>– Recreational Fishing Survey – Available as hardcopy or online. Many have been completed at boating and fishing shows, pop-up info stalls and other events. We've also collected survey responses at popular local boat ramps – Port Albert, Manns Beach, McLoughlins Beach and Port Welshpool.</li> <li>– Key findings from the survey responses to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concerns: Misperception about being 'Locked out' of the site or an exclusion zone greater than 50m from each turbine ; Impacts on fish from noise, vibration, EMF ; Visual amenity and ecological impacts from spills.</li> <li>- Positives: 'Artificial reef' effect creating habitat and attracting fish ; Broader ecological benefits ; Employment opportunities ; Improved seabed mapping.</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Ian commented that 106 survey responses is a limited sample given the number of people that live and fish in Gippsland and asked if there is anything the CAG can do to boost the engagement. Lachlan answered the online survey is still open and remains accessible on our website. We are always encouraging people to complete it and CAG members could do the same.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="https://getinvolved.starofthesouth.com.au/sots/offshore-wind/recreational-fishing-survey">https://getinvolved.starofthesouth.com.au/sots/offshore-wind/recreational-fishing-survey</a></p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wendy suggested perhaps promoting completing the online survey through fishing clubs and offering an incentive like a gift voucher from a tackle shop as a random prize.</li> <li>- We undertook an industry workshop last year where we engaged some of our key representative groups for feedback – Victorian Fisheries Authority, VRFish, Future Fish, Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, and the Boating Industry Association (Victoria).</li> <li>- Feedback from industry bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The islands (Seal group) are the most popular destination for offshore recreational fishers</li> <li>- Fishing numbers typically increase on weekends and holidays</li> <li>- Our survey results are consistent with their understanding, and they support our approach to this baseline study.</li> <li>- They have interest in: Vessel transit through the wind farm ; Potential enhancements to fishing ; How any impacts to fish and fishing would be managed ; Understanding the habitat and composition within the wind farm.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Lachlan commented we’ve also spoken to other boat and recreational users, and most don’t use the area due to distance offshore and the ocean conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yacht clubs in Gippsland indicated they don’t sail offshore or stick closer to shore. The area is well outside open-ocean yacht race routes.</li> <li>- Charter operators have expressed interest in fishing trips or engineering tourism if the wind farm is established.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Wendy offered an observation that when we see images of offshore wind farms, we don’t ever see ‘positive’ images with people fishing within these spaces. If this in-water structure is to improve fish habitat as expected, then it should be promoted.</li> <li>- Allan asked if we could see a summary of the fish species observed in our recent Pelagic Fish Surveys. <a href="#">Taken as a question on notice.</a></li> <li>- Glenn asked if the Recreational Fishing Survey results could be provided as a document or printout to be circulated within his office, with the website link added to encourage additional participants. <b>Action:</b> <a href="#">Lachlan and Jason to coordinate this request and then share with the CAG.</a></li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Other business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The meeting previously scheduled for Thursday 29 June to now be brought forward one day to Wednesday 28 June.</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Meeting close</b></p>

## Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	A white paper will be released from the Ocean Business Leaders' Summit, and we will share this with the CAG when it becomes available. <a href="#">*See further detail below</a>	Jason Pickering	Late April/Early May
2	Drafting a bespoke CAG letter to be circulated among the group for comment, alteration/acceptance.	Ian Gibson	Submitted 17/04/2023
3	Facilitate an introduction between Nina / South Gippsland Shire Council and Michael Dillon, the Star of the South - Ports and Harbours Package Manager.	Jason Pickering	26/04/2023
4	Summarise the Recreational Fishing Survey results into a document that can be shared amongst the CAG	Jason Pickering	26/04/2023

## Next meeting

Date	Time	Place
Wednesday 10 May	4 - 6 pm	Bond Street Event Centre, 10 Bond Street, Sale VIC 3850

## Questions taken on notice

### Question 1: A summary of the species observed within our recent Pelagic Fish Surveys.

Erin Cumming, Star of the South - Marine Environment Coordinator, stated that although the Pelagic Fish Survey was completed in February, the findings are still to be analysed and will be released early 2024. It could be presented when ready as a future CAG Focus topic.

What can be shared now is 43 hours of footage was captured, with approximately 500 fish sightings and 15 different species of fish were identified.

### \*Action No.1 – Further detail

#### OCEAN BUSINESS LEADERS SUMMIT

Work on the Summit White Paper has begun, and we are processing the data collected from the event which is drawn from a variety of sources. The Summit White Paper will be launched in late April/early May. Please be in touch if you have further information via email at the link below.

More detail can be found here: <https://oceandecadeaustralia.org/summit-2023>