

Minutes

Community Advisory Group meeting #20

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4:00pm – 6:00pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2023-06-28
Location	ETU Branch, Meeting Room; 42 Buckley Street, Morwell, VIC 3840		

Attendance

Members		Project team		Apologies	
Ian Gibson (Chair)	Anne Roussac-Hoyne		Erin Coldham		Marcus McKenzie
Allan Rogers	Travis Dillow		Paul Johnson		Deb Lucas
Wendy Farmer	Glen McColl		Jason Pickering		Jenny Smith
Julianne Peavey	Jonathan Pintus				Jess Lee
Nicki Jennings	Tony Cantwell				Harry Mitchelson
Peter Mooney	Nick Dudley				Tony Wolfe
Jack Winterbottom	Glenn Stagg				Darren McCubbin
					Nina Barry-Macaulay
	*Ken Fraser (<i>attending for Nina</i>)				

Key discussion points

Item	Discussion points
1	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
2	Standing items and actions from previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Apologies – Welcome new CAG member – Nick Dudley, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) – Endorsement of minutes from CAG meeting #19 – Endorsement of amendment to CAG 'Terms of Reference' document regarding member proxies – Declaration of potential conflicts of interest



Item	Discussion points
3	<p>What's happening on the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Refer to presentation for key updates.– Questions and comments from the group:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Paul spoke of the successful completion of our Seabed Studies, a 5 week offshore geotechnical campaign. The collected samples are now being laboratory analysed to better understand their composition and to help inform the design of our turbine foundations. The campaign was completed ahead of schedule and without any safety issues.– Erin added after previously measuring the locations' wind for two and a half years and furthering our knowledge of its environmental conditions, this soil substrate data will complete our understanding of the fundamentals of this site.– Nick asked when the coring samples were being taken, did the contractor have a camera available to determine if there were any submerged artifacts on the surface? There is no expectation that you are going to see things down there, given natural disturbance processes over thousands of years, but it would be good to have the opportunity to see. <p>Question taken on notice - Response provided at the end of the minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Wendy asked of Nick whether this should be given consideration when foundations are installed. Nick expects a cultural heritage advisor will be onboard to monitor this type of occurrence. Erin confirmed it's a project focus and is occurring as cultural heritage assessment forms part of our Environmental Effect Statement and Environmental Impact Statement technical studies.– Paul advised that the SOTS project team last week visited the Port of Hastings, which the Victorian Government has nominated as the most suitable location for the establishment of the Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal (VRET) to facilitate offshore wind construction.– Peter enquired about the local community sentiment towards VRET. Paul advised there is greater support for the offshore wind industry than there has been for other fuels in the past. An enormous amount of work needs to be completed to have this facility complete and operational to meet the timelines of offshore wind proponents. Erin added that the Port of Hastings is taking a comprehensive approach towards environmental assessment and community engagement.– Glenn asked whether the Victorian Government's preference for the Port of Hastings, is also the best choice for SOTS as a construction feeder port. Erin answered that notwithstanding its required development, it does have important natural features in suitable water depth and channel width. Another benefit that the Port of Hastings team is promoting is the ability to design and build a new facility to suit the offshore wind industry, rather than retrofitting an existing built facility. SOTS is still looking at the Port of Geelong and Bell Bay in Tasmania as alternative construction ports. Additional to the on-water port facilities, SOTS will need around 25ha of available space for the turbine components and around 7.5ha available for the foundations, so the reality is we'll still most likely need a secondary port.– Glenn asked whether SOTS has decided on an operations and maintenance port. Erin explained that Gippsland ports are well placed for operations and maintenance activities and offer long term employment benefits.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paul revealed that tomorrow, 29 June, SOTS is launching the “Making the move to offshore wind – A guide for workers”. This document shares what we know about the skills, experience and qualifications current coal power and mining, oil and gas and maritime workers hold – and how these transfer to the offshore wind industry. Wendy asked whether advance copies are available for the CAG before the launch and Jason offered to distribute a link to download a digital copy tomorrow after the launch. Printed copies will be available soon. <p>Action: 1. Jason to share the link to “Making the move to offshore wind – A guide for workers” to the CAG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paul stated that our local supply chain capabilities and opportunities report, and ports assessment are all still progressing, and we’ll inform the CAG of the findings of each when complete. - Nick asked with the announcement of the proposed Southern Ocean offshore wind zone, from Warrnambool in Victoria to Port MacDonnell in South Australia, whether SOTS is planning another project for this area. Erin explained we have spoken at previous CAG meetings that our main investor, Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP), certainly has interests in other offshore wind projects, but they still see Gippsland as the most promising. With respect to the Southern Ocean area, significant due diligence is required. There are significant whale breeding locations close to Portland that need to be better understood. CIP will investigate this region, like other developers, during the consultation period.
4	<p>GLaWAC Renewable Energy Strategy, presented by Nick Dudley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to presentation for key updates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nick provided an overview of GLaWAC, their staff, organisational strategies and cultural heritage responsibilities, and an activity summary of the engagement and consultation undertaken with renewable energy developers. - The Renewable Energy Strategy has been developed to build capacity for the traditional owners of the country to be represented in their community, and within development discussions, and that their rights and views are respected and clearly understood. The strategy has been derived from the holistic document, ‘Gunaikurnai-Whole-of-Country Plan’. <p>https://gunaikurnai.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Gunaikurnai-Whole-of-Country-Plan-ONLINE.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erin acknowledged the importance of respectful engagement with traditional owners and that we are very grateful to GLaWAC and Uncle Russell, for their contribution to our Cultural Values assessment and mindful of the sensitivities and the ownership of cultural knowledge and heritage. - Peter asked whether there are opportunities for individuals to receive cultural heritage awareness training. Nick strongly supported this but GLaWAC favours delivering training to groups given staff resourcing limitations. Erin added SOTS has cultural awareness training planned for SOTS staff and if there is no cap on numbers, could consider opening it up to include CAG members. Paul will investigate and communicate to the CAG. <p>Action: 2. Jason to share the two GLaWAC links from Nick’s presentation to the CAG.</p> <p>Action: 3. Provide an update on the upcoming SOTS cultural heritage awareness training, and any availability for CAG participation.</p>



Item	Discussion points
5	<p>What’s happening in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Peter Mooney <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Updated the group about the 150mw battery recently installed at Hazelwood. You can read more here: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-14/first-big-battery-at-ex-coal-site-goes-live/102477230 – It was 6-month installation project for about 70 ETU members, which was a good project for the area. The developer was very complimentary of the quality of the local skills and workmanship which highlights the capability of using the local workforce within the planned renewable energy transition. – It is likely that most of the major electrical switchyards throughout Victoria will install a similar battery, with similar batteries planned locally for Jeeralang and Morwell Terminal. The batteries are intended to create inertia, enabling a consistence within the system despite the inclusion of variable power inputs from renewables. – Wendy enquired whether this was the end of the battery installs at Hazelwood. Peter advised that the developers have plans to upgrade to 300mw or even add a third stage if performance expectations are met. – Julianne asked where the power to this Hazelwood battery originates from. Peter explained the battery is fed by the existing coal fired power stations but will be fed by renewables in the future. – Jack Winterbottom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack shared that he had been absent from the CAG after spending 4 months in the Tiwi Islands, in a facility caretaker role during the non-operational wet season for Tiwi Tours, a subsidiary of AAT Kings Guided Holiday Company. – He experienced tropical cyclone ‘Elliott’, temperatures that didn’t drop below 26°C and many substantial rain events, like one 200mm in 4-hour occurrence. – As a birdwatcher, Jack documented an impressive 79 species of birds within the township of Wurrumiyanga, where he was staying. – Nick asked if while away Jack had an opportunity to read the document ‘Impacts on birds from offshore wind farms in Australia, 2022’ by Reid, Baker and Woehler. Jack said he would appreciate a shared link. Nicki confirmed with Nick that she had the link to the same document and would share it with the entire CAG through Jason. <p>Action: 4. Jason to share the link to ‘Impacts on birds from offshore wind farms in Australia’, 2022 by Reid, Baker, and Woehler.</p>
6	Break
7	<p>Focus topic: Earliest possible delivery timeline (current at June 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Erin Coldham, SOTS Chief Development Officer, provided an overview of the project timeline and milestones, including points at which decisions are required to progress to the next step. The discussion covered timeframes for licencing, policy decision effects, environment and planning approvals, site investigations, engineering design, grid connection and procurement.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the second time we have provided a detailed look at our timeline, with the previous occurring at CAG#15. - Questions from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicki asked when feasibility licences will be awarded. Erin explained the anticipated timeframe was a matter for government, but we hoped to have a response later this year. - Glenn asked if SOTS know which other proponents have applied for sites within the declared zone and in what areas. Erin explained that SOTS is aware of several parties interested in applying for an offshore wind licence in Gippsland, however the exact boundaries are unknown. - Allan asked whether other proponents were required to undertake similar volume of study and survey data as SOTS. Erin indicated that earlier studies were conducted under the 2019 Exploration Licence. It is expected other proponents would conduct similar studies under a Feasibility Licence and that the guidelines for applying for a licence focus on what developers would undertake if a licence was granted. - Nicki asked whether SOTS major project status will assist with the feasibility licence application. Erin answered no, it is more relevant to navigating our environmental approvals. - Allan and Nicki both raised queries regarding a shared transmission solution being completed in time to align with our project timeline or the ability to meet the Victorian Government’s scheduled offshore wind production targets. Erin advised this is a decision for Government and SOTS is sharing technical information to assist. - Julianne asked whether SOTS is still planning on an underground transmission solution to the closest connection point. Erin answered yes, and SOTS will continue advancing the underground solution, also noting the government guidance about underground connection to the shared transmission point. - Allan asked whether turbine procurement could impact this timeline. Erin explained the supply chain is tight and it will be challenging, but through our alignment with CIP who are building many projects around the world, SOTS is fortunate to have a global relationship to these suppliers. - Jack asked if port developments, which are out of SOTS control, aren’t ready by your ideal time, then presumably no construction can occur until then either. Erin agreed but acknowledged the availability of a construction feeder port is most important initially as an operations and maintenance port is not required until later. - Ian noted project timeline information is valuable to the CAG members, and a similar update would be welcomed a few times a year. - Erin closed by highlighting that there are many aspects of the timeline that are out of SOTS control, and this is why collaboration is so important. SOTS aims to ensure everyone’s point of view is understood as this allows SOTS to plan for some of the unknowns.
8	<p>Other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A reminder, the meeting previously scheduled for Wednesday 16 August is now Thursday 24 August, as Ian will be away until that time.
9	<p>Meeting close</p>

Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	Share the link to “Making the move to offshore wind – A guide for workers”	Jason	29/06/2023
2	Share the two GLaWAC links from Nick’s presentation	Jason	29/06/2023
3	Provide an update on the upcoming SOTS cultural heritage awareness training with GLaWAC, and any availability for CAG participation.	Paul / Jason	26/07/2023
4	Share the link to ‘Impacts on birds from offshore wind farms in Australia, 2022’ by Reid, Baker and Woehler.	Jason	29/06/2023

Next meeting

Date	Time	Place
Thursday 24 August 2023	4 - 6 pm	Port Welshpool Coast Guard, Training Room.

Questions taken on notice

Question 1: When the coring samples were being taken in our recent seabed studies, did the contractor have a camera available to determine if there were any submerged artifacts on the surface?

An underwater camera was available on the 2020 geophysical survey, however poor weather conditions prevented it being deployed. An underwater camera was used on the recent geotechnical survey, however disturbance at the seabed prevented any images suitable for identifying artifacts being obtained.