

Community Advisory Group – Meeting #3



Date:	Thursday 11 February 2021	Time:	4-6pm
Place:	Traralgon Bowls Club	Meeting number:	Three
Chair:	Ian Gibson	Minutes:	Sarah Altmann

Attendees:

Members - Rick Rutjens, Darren McCubbin, Jane Oakley, Tony Wolfe, Jessica Young, Peter Mooney, Wendy Farmer, Travis Dillow, Deb Lucas, Jenny Smith, Susan McMillan, Julianne Peavey, Glenn Stagg, Jack Winterbottom, Mary-Lou Dixon, Allan Rogers, Cr Marcus McKenzie, Harry Mitchelson

Star of the South - Erin Coldham, Naomi Campbell, Martina Gassner, Sarah Altmann

Apologies: Shannan Little, Jonathan Pintus, Dane Heinrich, Caleb Barlow, Matt Langdon

Minutes:

#	Key discussion points
1	Acknowledgement of Country and welcome
2	<p>Standing items and actions from previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of minutes for CAG meeting #2. • Allan declared a potential conflict of interest for the register. Star of the South are looking to survey recreational fishers at boat ramps and Allan has volunteered his services. He does similar work for the Victorian Fisheries Authority and has several years' experience. Star of the South consider it appropriate to pay Allan for his time and expenses such as petrol. Allan would prefer not to accept payment to avoid a perceived conflict. There was discussion at the meeting about whether this represents a conflict of interest. Some members considered that there is no conflict. Others believe there could be a potential conflict but it had been addressed by Allan's declaration. Several members expressed the view that it is fair that Allan should be paid for his time and expenses. The Chairperson will consider the discussion alongside the Conflict of Interest procedure. • The Chairperson noted that answers to questions taken on notice in the previous meeting had been distributed via email and on the CAG webpage. No further questions were raised by the group. • The Chairperson encouraged members to continue using the CAG webpage. The project team advised that an SMS alert trial is planned so members are aware of new posts. There were no objections to participating in an SMS trial.
3	<p>What's happening on the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star of the South is recruiting a Community Liaison Officer. • Site investigations are ongoing at sea. • Star of the South is finalising the process for selecting a transmission corridor for the project. This is expected to be discussed with landholders later in March, followed by updates to the broader community. • Star of the South is presenting to local groups including Rotary Traralgon and the Prom Area Climate Action Group. • The Victorian Government's Technical Reference Group has been convened to advise on preparation of the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environment Effects Statement (EES). The second meeting is being held in mid-February. A public comment period on the EIS/EES scope (what we're required to assess in the EIS/EES) is expected in Q2 2021. Star of the South will provide more updates closer to this time. • Star of the South attended a Victorian Government briefing on the Energy Innovation Fund and plans to submit an application for grant funding to support project development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Star of the South is planning community events in Gippsland during March/April and sought feedback about good locations to set up a marquee where people can drop by to talk with the team. Suggestions included local markets and presentations to groups. Members are encouraged to direct suggestions to Sarah.
4	<p>What's happening in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allan attended a Mcloughlins Beach Residents and Ratepayers meeting. He informed the group of his role on the CAG and encouraged people to reach out if they want something raised through the group. A few members had seen a law firm called Simon and Duffy advertising a Star of the South landholder information session and thought it was being organised by the project team. The project team confirmed this is not a project-run event and that the law firm has not contacted them to seek information or discuss the event. The project team will make direct contact with landholders to confirm the transmission corridor later in March. Wendy advised the Friends of the Earth are launching a report on jobs in renewable energy on Monday 15 February. Rick advised Marinus Link project engagement has been underway in South Gippsland and has attracted some interest in the community. The Chairperson advised that a Marinus Link webinar is being held on Wednesday 24 February at 11am for anyone interested in learning more about this project. Julianne noted that people in the Woodside/Giffard/Darriman area are concerned about which transmission corridor will be selected, with particular concern about impacts at the Mullundung State Forest. There is also broader concern about other renewable energy projects in this area.
5	<p>Focus on: Marine Ecology Survey Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martina Gassner provided an overview of the project's Marine Ecology Survey Program (MESp) – refer to presentation supplied.
6	<p>Questions and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern raised about fish study methodology not including pelagic fish such as tuna and salmon which are common to the area – project team to discuss with fish specialist advising on methodology, taken on notice. Concern that wind farm could interrupt natural movement of fish up and down the coast. Question about post-construction learnings from other wind farms – did they result in a change to fish and whale movements? Generally the predicted impacts are conservative (worst case) and actual impacts observed post-construction are much lower. Question about why baited underwater videos are deployed for different durations and do white shark deployments link with data from white shark acoustic receivers? Data from the white shark receivers is not available yet. Locations are selected based on advice from specialists. Other locations are selected randomly to provide a representative sample of the area and one hour deployments provide a snapshot in time. Videos are taken in different seasons. Question about whether there is evidence of impacts to birds from wind farms. Some birds are struck by turbines, however models are very conservative and the predicted impact is typically higher than the actual impact observed during operation. Many birds adapt their behaviour to avoid the turbines. Project studies will look at bird flight height and behaviours to understand potential for impacts and how these can be addressed. Wendy commented that impacts to birds from vehicles and buildings is far greater than from turbines. Question about duration of data collection – does it continue during and post construction? Baseline data needs to stop at some stage (around 2 years expected) so it can be used to inform environmental assessments. Some ongoing environmental monitoring is expected during and post-construction. Requirements for this will be determined through the project's environmental assessment and in approval conditions. Question about why the coastal process wave and current monitors are located nearshore in shallow water? The aim is to understand the nearshore/coastal environment and how sediment moves and collects in this area. Helps assess any potential impacts such as erosion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question about whether the project design is adjusted for bird flight paths? There are some adjustments that can be made to reduce the risk of collision such as turbine selection and layout. Overseas studies are looking into other mitigation measures such as painting a blade black. • Question about when marine surveys finish? Different baseline surveys started at different times, so some will finish later this year with others continuing into next year. • Question about whether findings will be publicly available? Yes in the project's EIS/EES. • Comment about the need to make findings accessible for everyone. The project team will ensure that key findings are clearly communicated through meetings and information sessions, and in summary documents so that information can be widely accessed and understood.
7	<p>Other items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for future agenda items – jobs and investment in Gippsland, turbines (how they work, technology development). • Feedback sought on meeting – Chair acknowledged difficulties of hybrid meetings, noted improvements on the previous meeting and the need to keep trying to make it work. • Suggestion for future meeting location – Sale raised as a potential location by several members.

Actions

#	Description	Owner
1	Implement SMS trial for CAG member webpage, confirm when SMS's are sent. Group to provide feedback on how it goes.	Sarah
2	Provide responses to questions taken on notice.	Sarah / Martina

Next meeting

Date:	Thursday 11 March
Time:	5pm-7pm
Place:	Criterion Hotel, Sale

Minutes prepared by:	Sarah Altmann
Minutes approved by:	Ian Gibson