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INVESTIGATIONS START ON AUSTRALIA'S FIRST OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Site investigations have started on Australia's first proposed offshore wind project off the south coast of Gippsland, as a new Chief Executive Officer is appointed to take the project into the next phase.

The Star of the South project this week started deploying wind and wave monitoring equipment from Port Welshpool to collect important data on the wind profile and conditions in Bass Strait.

Two wind measuring devices, known as floating LiDARs, and a wave buoy will be out at sea for several years along with other investigations, including seabed studies to confirm sea depths and conditions, as well as baseline environmental surveys for marine life and birds.

Local Gippsland workers are now amongst the first in Australia to be trained to service the wind and wave monitoring equipment while it's out at sea. Specialist wind and wave contractor Akrocean shipped the equipment to Australia from Europe last month, with support from local supplier TEK-Ocean who is assisting with equipment installation and ongoing maintenance works.

Next year, the project will also start soil testing to understand ground conditions in the area. These investigations will help confirm the project's feasibility and inform early planning.

In further news, Casper Frost Thorhauge joins the Star of the South as the project's new CEO with extensive experience in developing and delivering offshore wind projects in Europe and Asia.

Most recently, Mr Thorhauge led the multi-billion-dollar 900-megawatt Greater Changhua 1 and 2a Offshore Wind Farms in Taiwan. He has also held senior management roles and board positions with one of Denmark's biggest energy companies, where he successfully led a number of offshore wind projects through their development phase totalling more than \$10 billion.

The Star of the South involves wind turbines out at sea generating electricity and connecting to the network in the Latrobe Valley.

The Star of the South would be the biggest offshore wind project in the southern hemisphere and could supply around 18% of the State's electricity needs and help protect against blackouts in summer.

The project has the potential to create thousands of jobs during construction and hundreds in operation, injecting investment into Gippsland's economy.

If the project is feasible and developed to its full potential, it could provide around 2,000 megawatts of power into the grid by 2027. For more information visit starofthesouth.com.au/getinvolved.

Quotes attributable to Star of the South CEO, Casper Frost Thorhauge:

"I'm excited to work on Australia's first proposed offshore wind project – the Star of the South."

"This project has the potential to power hundreds of thousands of Victorian homes, providing a reliable and consistent source of energy, while creating jobs and investment for Gippsland."

"The Star of the South is ramping up with site investigations starting to collect valuable data to inform early project planning."

"We're pleased to be supporting local Gippsland workers during this early development phase and look forward to more opportunities to invest in the region as we continue our studies."