

# Star of the South

## Community consultation summary

November 2019





## The Star of the South is Australia's first proposed offshore wind project.

We are investigating the Star of the South project - an exciting new offshore development that has the potential to power hundreds of thousands of Victorian homes, meeting a substantial part of the State's electricity needs.

Proposed to be located off the south coast of Gippsland, the Star of the South would be a reliable, consistent and clean source of energy for Victoria, while creating significant jobs and investment.



Veja Mate offshore wind farm in Germany



## Community consultation

Despite this early phase, we are committed to involving the community in shaping Australia's first proposed offshore wind farm from the outset. In September, we ran a community and stakeholder consultation program to share information about the project and gather feedback on our site investigations planned for late 2019.

In addition to seeking feedback on the planned site investigations, we also asked people to let us know what's important to them, what opportunities and challenges they see for the project and how they want to be kept updated on the project as it progresses.

### What we heard

General feedback about the Star of the South showed community support for the project which was largely driven by the opportunities offshore wind could provide for Gippsland communities. We also heard about potential issues and concerns that should be taken into consideration as we progress our planning work.

We heard the most important elements of the project are:



Local jobs, industry, investment and tourism opportunities



Fishing in the area



Mitigating potential impacts on the environment



Building an offshore wind farm to increase Victoria's energy supply



Managing community impacts



Opportunities to get involved

# Feedback snapshot

During the consultation, we asked people to provide feedback on the Star of the South through a number of channels.

Below is a snapshot of the key topics of interest and sentiment from those who participated. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback and attended our local sessions.



**63%** of respondents **didn't have suggestions, feedback or concerns** about site investigations



Of the **37% of respondents** who indicated they had suggestions or concerns regarding site investigations, **40% were concerned about possible environmental impacts**, whilst **20% were concerned about impacts to fishing**



**45%** of respondents felt **Gippsland's natural beauty** makes the area unique



**65%** of respondents are most excited about **opportunities for local jobs and industry**, as well as **clean and reliable energy** if the project proceeds to construction and operation



Over **40% of respondents** see **local job opportunities and protecting environmental assets** as the most important considerations in project planning



**83%** of respondents were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the **information and materials available at this stage**



Over **90%** of respondents were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the **opportunities to have their say**

# Our responses to key topics raised

Topic	Our response
<p><b>LOCAL JOBS AND INDUSTRY ARE A TOP PRIORITY</b></p>	<p>We will continue to work with local people, businesses and the education and training sectors to discuss opportunities, identify local skills and capabilities and understand any barriers to employment or contracting. We are also committed to supporting the Gippsland region's economy during the feasibility phase.</p> <p>Businesses are able to register their interest in the project via our website - we will keep in touch as our investigations continue.</p>
<p><b>PROTECTING THE REGION'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS</b></p>	<p>During the feasibility phase, we are undertaking site investigations including wind and wave monitoring, seabed studies (geophysical and geotechnical surveys) and monitoring for marine mammals and birds. There are laws in Australia that strictly govern the type of site investigations we are planning, and we are complying with requirements and controls, to minimise the potential for any impacts.</p> <p>We have environmental specialists on board who are conducting full assessments of any potential impacts as a result of our site investigations. These assessments have found the potential impacts to be low. We are sharing the details of our assessments with government regulators to ensure a thorough independent review and we will comply with any further directions or obligations as part of this process.</p> <p>Our contractors are also required to prepare environmental plans to ensure the investigations are carried out responsibly.</p> <p><b>Referral under the <i>Environment Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)</i></b> We have referred our geophysical and geotechnical investigations under the Commonwealth Government's EPBC Act so that our assessment and proposed mitigations are very transparent, independently assessed and include a formal public comment period. Visit <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc">www.environment.gov.au/epbc</a> for more information on this process.</p> <p><b>Referral under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i></b> We have referred our geophysical and geotechnical investigations under the Victorian Government's <i>Marine and Coastal Act</i>. Our assessment and proposed mitigations are transparent and independently assessed and include measures such as marine mammal observers onboard the vessel while we undertake our activities. Visit <a href="http://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-act">www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-act</a> for more information on this.</p> <p><b>RAMSAR sites</b> Survey operations will not be carried out within the nearby RAMSAR sites as they will be limited to water depths greater than five metres due to the draft of the vessel. The RAMSAR sites extend to water depths of 3.5 to 4.5 metres.</p> <p><b>Ongoing environmental and planning assessments</b> We will require Victorian and Commonwealth planning and environmental approvals to develop Australia's first proposed offshore wind farm. While we continue our investigations into the feasibility of the project, we will collect important baseline data and evidence which will be presented and considered as part of the project's formal planning assessment and approval processes.</p> <p>These processes are very comprehensive and include extensive public consultation. Visit our website at <a href="http://starofthsouth.com.au">starofthsouth.com.au</a> for more information on these assessment and approvals processes.</p>



Topic	Our response
<p><b>ENSURING RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING NEEDS ARE CONSIDERED</b></p> 	<p><b>Site investigations</b> We have consulted with marine shipping, tourism and fishing (recreational, commercial and Indigenous) communities regarding our planned site investigations to ensure equipment is placed in a safe and navigable location.</p> <p>The planned locations of fixed equipment such as acoustic equipment and floating LiDARs will also be made known to all marine users through the Notice to Mariners (issued via the Australian Hydrographic Office), Transport Safety Victoria and other relevant organisations.</p> <p>While we don't expect any major impacts during our activities, we advise fishers and other marine users to keep a sensible and safe distance from our equipment and operations. We have set up a dedicated phone number so fishers can continue to contact us with any concerns on 1800 340 340, should any impacts arise.</p> <p><b>Fishing and offshore wind</b> We acknowledge the legislated rights of commercial fishers and we also recognise that recreational fishing is hugely important to locals and visitors to Gippsland. We are open and committed to working with fishers on the potential benefits that could be created by an offshore wind farm as well as understanding how we can best co-exist and collaborate into the future.</p> <p>We are keen to understand more about other marine users and how we can best design a wind farm that considers the needs of others, while ensuring the safety of everyone around an operating wind farm.</p> <p>Please contact us on 1800 340 340 if you would like to share more about where you fish or how you use the waters off the south coast of Gippsland.</p>

Topic	Our response
<p><b>MANAGING COMMUNITY IMPACTS</b></p> 	<p>We recognise that the Star of the South project will mean some physical changes to the local environment if it proceeds to construction and operation. We are currently in the feasibility phase, with site investigations to confirm how the project could be designed.</p> <p>We will share information about our planning and design work and will investigate (together with local people) opportunities to minimise potential community impacts as a result of the project, should it proceed to construction and operation.</p> <p>We encourage anyone with concerns at this early stage to contact us on 1800 340 340 or email us at <a href="mailto:info@starofthesouth.com.au">info@starofthesouth.com.au</a>.</p> <p><b>Visibility</b> Offshore wind farms are typically seen from land - our current licence area is around 10 kilometres from the coast so we would expect the wind farm to be visible if it proceeds to construction and operation.</p> <p>We will be doing studies into what people could expect to see from the coast and we will develop some visuals and artist impressions of the wind farm as part of those studies to share with people, once we have a better idea of the potential design.</p> <p><b>Cables and transmission</b> A critical part of the Star of the South project involves connecting the wind farm to the National Electricity Market in the Latrobe Valley.</p> <p>We're planning to use underground cables for the transmission lines, unless it is not technically feasible and/or where overhead lines would have lower impacts. The substations needed to connect to the underground cables will need to be above ground.</p> <p>We will conduct assessments and technical studies to help confirm details around our transmission route and design. We'll keep locals informed about our studies and will share information about possible routes once we've done some more work on possible engineering solutions.</p>
<p><b>SETTING THE PROJECT UP FOR SUCCESS</b></p> 	<p>We are currently in the feasibility phase but we are excited about the potential to build Australia's first offshore wind project. We encourage people to keep in touch with us and follow our updates through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1800 340 340 community line</li> <li>• Project website at <a href="http://starofthesouth.com.au">starofthesouth.com.au</a></li> <li>• Social media pages on Facebook and LinkedIn</li> <li>• Dedicated community engagement website: 'Get Involved' at <a href="http://starofthesouth.com.au/getinvolved">starofthesouth.com.au/getinvolved</a></li> <li>• General enquiries email address at <a href="mailto:info@starofthesouth.com.au">info@starofthesouth.com.au</a></li> <li>• Contact form on our website at <a href="http://starofthesouth.com.au/contact">starofthesouth.com.au/contact</a></li> <li>• E-updates</li> <li>• Project newsletters.</li> </ul> <p>We know there is strong interest in offshore wind as a technology and getting the best result for Gippsland so we look forward to further conversations as we progress the project.</p>



“We are committed to **involving the community** in shaping Australia’s first proposed offshore wind farm.”

## Next steps

We’re taking your feedback onboard as we prepare to undertake our site investigations.

As part of the approvals for the site investigations, we have developed mitigation measures to reduce impacts on communities and the environment.

We are committed to keeping people informed and will provide further opportunities to get involved as we continue progressing bringing offshore wind to Australia.

## Get involved

There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved as we progress the Star of the South project. Sign up to receive updates and the latest project news at [starofthesouth.com.au/getinvolved](http://starofthesouth.com.au/getinvolved). You can follow us on Facebook, email us at [info@starofthesouth.com.au](mailto:info@starofthesouth.com.au) or call us on 1800 340 340.

It’s early days for the project and we’re keen to work closely with Gippsland communities and other interested parties as we continue to investigate the feasibility of building Australia’s first offshore wind farm in Gippsland.



[starofthesouth.com.au](http://starofthesouth.com.au)

## More information

To find out more about the Star of the South project and register for future updates:

 [starofthesouth.com.au](http://starofthesouth.com.au)

 1800 340 340

 [info@starofthesouth.com.au](mailto:info@starofthesouth.com.au)

 Star of the South

 Star of the South Project



Interpreter service: 13 14 50

