

## Minutes

### Community Advisory Group meeting #19

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4:00pm – 6:00pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2023-05-10
Location	'Bond Street Event Centre'; 10 Bond Street, Sale, VIC 3850.		

## Attendance

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

## 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 #18</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 <a href="#">presentation for key updates</a>.</li> <li>– Questions and comments from the group:</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Erin Cumming, Star of the South (SOTS) - Marine Environment Coordinator, spoke of the Aerial Whale Studies to detect migratory whales. The studies commenced in February, are being conducted twice a month until August, with the findings likely to be released in early 2024.</li> <li>– Paul advised that SOTS successfully submitted our Feasibility Licence application on April 27. We are anticipating an outcome by the end of this calendar year but have not been given a definitive timeframe.</li> <li>– Our Seabed Studies began on 8 April, this offshore Geotechnical investigation campaign involves taking borehole samples and cone penetration testing to learn more about the ground conditions under the seabed. This will better inform project planning and any future construction activities. This campaign will take around 5 weeks to complete and is co-funded by the Victorian Government.</li> <li>– Jason added that when this campaign began, he had circulated a project factsheet titled 'Seabed Investigations' to the CAG members through email and our shared Microsoft Teams Page which provides additional detail about the investigations. It can also be accessed on our website here: <a href="https://www.starofthesouth.com.au/resources">https://www.starofthesouth.com.au/resources</a></li> <li>– Jess asked that given the seabed investigations is co-funded by the Victorian Government, will other proponents have access to the findings. <b>Question taken on notice: Response provided at the end of these minutes.</b></li> <li>– Allan asked if at the completion of the seabed investigations, SOTS will know what size turbine they will be looking to use. Paul advised the findings will inform more of potential foundation depth and installation requirements than mast or turbine size.</li> <li>– Paul spoke of the Trades Fit Expo we were planning to attend at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. This careers event is attended by around 3,000 female secondary school students and promotes employment opportunities into non-traditional roles for young women.</li> <li>– SOTS recently attended the 'Deadly in Gippsland – First Nations Business Expo' in Lakes Entrance; Gippsland Tech School's – A Renewable Future; and Federation University's Cooperative University Industry Workshop. All of which were well attended and valuable for Star of the South to be involved with.</li> <li>– A range of project presentations had been delivered by SOTS since CAG last met in late March. This included presentations to representatives from industry and emergency response groups, community, education providers and recreational sectors.</li> <li>– Erin Cumming informed of her presentation to the Latrobe Valley SCUBA Club. Around 20 local divers attended, many of whom work within the local power industry and were keen to gain more insight into what is being learned through the project's Marine Ecology programme.</li> <li>– Ian asked Erin if the SOTS Exploration Licence area was an important diving area. Erin replied no, only one member mentioned an appetite to dive there once infrastructure is potentially installed. The site is distant from wrecks and the preferred diving sites of Wilsons Promontory.</li> <li>– Jenny asked if SOTS had considered the two nearby heritage wreck sites regarding diving interest. Erin advised these sites had been considered as part of our underwater cultural heritage investigations and our site was overlaid with any</li> </ul>

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	<p>known or suspected wrecks. The closest suspected wreck is the Schooner 'Sarah' of which there is no precise detection yet, but it is thought to be much closer to the shore and the second is the 'Glenelg', but that is north-east of our area and not permissible for recreational diving anyway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jenny agreed that diving the heritage wrecks is not permissible and that the Port Albert Coast Guard regularly visits the 'Glenelg' and the 'Thistle' which is even closer to Port Albert to ensure no-one is diving on them.</li> <li>– Ian offered his thanks for comment and feedback from the CAG members regarding the letter he drafted for inclusion with the SOTS Feasibility Licence application.</li> <li>– Paul shared that SOTS will be presenting the findings from the Workforce mapping and Local Supply Chain report to CAG once complete. Glen added that he felt these investigations could be very valuable to Local Government Areas, and having access to the findings could allow councils to reallocate funding set aside for similar work.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>What's happening in the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Nicki Jennings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– VicGrid has held three drop-in sessions at Woodside, Yarram, and Sale.</li> <li>– A VicGrid representative at the Sale session mentioned that there is a possibility that there could be an offshore grid connection point, rather than the onshore terminal points.</li> <li>– The 3,000-hectare site at Giffard to be developed as the 'Gippsland Renewable Energy Park', was to contain a 5,000+ acre solar farm. Nicki recently learned that with a change of developer, this will now become a terrestrial wind farm. There has been insufficient communication with neighbouring landowners regarding this significant planning development despite all being strongly affected.</li> <li>– Several local landowners have signed access agreements allowing ACCIONA Australia to study and install trial turbines, exploring potential for additional terrestrial wind farm development in the Gippsland Coastal Plains region.</li> <li>– Allan asked if there were community objections to the test farms exploring onshore wind. Nicki advised the community is certainly not unified on further development.</li> <li>– Ian has been informed that 31 applicants applied for a 'Feasibility Licence', but a far smaller number will be successful. Ian asked how we understand the cumulative impact of all interactions on communities. Darren responded GCCN is developing a portal to amalgamate information and how to offer feedback, but the reality is the situation will be unclear until licences are awarded. The portal will in time provide access to information on the proponents, their projects, and transmission solutions and where each of these developments are placed against their respective timelines. There is working group developing this now and it will hopefully be available online soon, but it will be light-on for information until confirmation of the successful applicants is known, similarly with any transmission solutions offered. As industry updates happen, the website will reflect these and eliminate the need to search projects individually.</li> <li>– Darren added also if there were 31 applications submitted, it affords an opportunity to pick the absolute best projects. Some of the biggest companies in the world, who have experience in delivering offshore wind energy projects at the highest level, are</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Item	Discussion points
	<p>focusing on Gippsland right now and the opportunity for first class development is fantastic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jack asked do VicGrid have any authority over SOTS transmission solution, can they force you to go above ground. Paul answered it is each proponent's responsibility to bring their exported power to the connection point and this could now be closer to the coast than our original planned connection point at Loy Yang. VicGrid will ultimately now manage how it gets back to the Latrobe Valley from that connection point. SOTS has remained committed to delivering an underground transmission solution to the connection point.</li> <li>– Paul reminded that the formal feedback submission period for VicGrid was soon to close and encouraged all members to record feedback.</li> <li>– Ian attended the Australian Wind Industry Summit and detailed a common theme that there is some confusion around the industry's social licence - what it means and how it would be developed and delivered. Darren offered that GCCN has a local PHD student analysing that topic and offered that it might be beneficial if she spoke to the CAG at a future meeting. Ian supported that idea.</li> <li>– Nicki mentioned that she had contact with a landholder on the SOTS planned Transmission route and that the contract they were offered to sign requested exclusivity of easement for SOTS infrastructure only, is this the typical. <b>Question taken on Notice:</b> Response provided at the end of these minutes.</li> </ul>
5	Break
6	<p><b>Focus topic: Commercial fishing engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lachlan McKinnon, SOTS - Fishing Liaison Officer, provided an overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Commercial Fishing Industry could be considered one the most important commercial sectors offshore, outside of offshore oil and gas, and has the longest history of identified sectors.</li> <li>– The reason for this engagement is to understand the level of commercial fishing in the area, to develop long-term relationships within the industry and identify any effect development may have on industry and on individual fishers.</li> <li>– There are over 500 licence holders that have the right to operate in SOTS proposed area. SOTS is refining this to the number of fishers that do or have operated there and is engaging directly with the fishers, with industry bodies and with fishery managers.</li> <li>– There are around 20 fishery sectors that can or have the right to operate in that area. These are split over Commonwealth and Victorian managed fisheries.</li> <li>– Ian asked can individual fishers hold licences in multiple sectors. Lachlan confirmed they can theoretically hold a licence in each sector.</li> <li>– Jess asked regarding any engagement gaps within the sectors - is that because they won't tell you they fish in the area or because they don't. Lachlan answered catch history data indicates who has and who does. Both the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) ran reports that covered catch history for a twenty-year period for our exploration licence area. They also facilitated communication between those licence holders and SOTS.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jack asked is there a legal requirement for commercial fishers to always report what they catch, where it was caught and any by-product. Harry answered yes there is, and the boats also have cameras on them and report their 'Automatic Identification System' positions electronically every 20 seconds, so the fishery managers know where you are always and what you have caught.</li> <li>– Lachlan added we are legislated to share the area and if a particular method of commercial fishing is no longer able to continue during the construction or the operations and maintenance phase of the project, then we are committed to compensating commercial fishers with a genuine claim for a loss of access. Any catch history would need to be demonstratable with the VFA or AFMA to legitimise claims.</li> <li>– Nicki asked whether the inter-array cables between individual turbines be buried or lying on the seabed. Lachlan answered they will be buried. This would assist the operations of many commercial fishers.</li> <li>– Lachlan closed by saying there are concerns from fishers about any short-term or long-term displacement from the area, but also interest in opportunities to earn supplementary income, (through surveys or guarding during construction). There is interest in comparing any initial impact during construction and the expected ecological benefit through habitat creation after establishment of the infrastructure.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Brief Update: Estimating fish age with Otoliths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allan Rogers provided an overview of Otolith bones in fish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The idea for this presentation came about as Allan had asked Lachlan McKinnon in the previous CAG meeting if SOTS were ageing fish or determining the geographical origin of those captured within our pelagic fish studies. Allan has great familiarity on this topic having provided Otolith bones for fisheries for over 20 years to further their academic research and management decisions, and Jason felt that this topic would be of interest to the broader CAG membership.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Refer to CAG#19 slide deck for further detail.</a></p>
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> <li>– The meeting previously scheduled for the Wednesday 16 August to now be delayed until Thursday 24 August as Ian will be away until that time.</li> <li>– Marcus suggested as a future agenda topic exploring SOTS Community Benefits plan and intended legacy. It's a topic of significant interest to Wellington Shire Council. Ian suggested Marcus may be able to contribute or lead a discussion on Council expectations and wishes in the future, which was supported by Marcus.</li> <li>– Glen added the Latrobe Valley Authority are working on a combined Community Benefit programme and have formed a working group to explore future opportunity. SOTS have representation in this forum, with both Paul and Jason already attending these meetings.</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Meeting close</b></p>

## Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	-	-	-

## Next meeting

Date	Time	Place
Wednesday 28 June	4 - 6 pm	Morwell ETU Branch, Meeting Room

## Questions taken on notice

### **Question 1: Given the seabed investigations are co-funded by the Victorian Government, will other proponents have access to the findings?**

Erin Coldham, SOTS Chief Development Officer, had answered this question when asked the same at CAG Meeting #18 - That some of the findings would be publicly accessible as 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.

### **Question 2: Are landholders on the planned Transmission route being requested to commit to an exclusivity of easement to host SOTS infrastructure only on their properties?**

SOTS's standard Option terms do include a requirement that the Grantor (Landholder) does not enter into a land contract with another electricity generator or transmission project developer unless first agreed to by SOTS. This can be commonly referred to as the "Exclusivity Clause" as mentioned by the CAG member.

"Exclusivity Clauses" are industry standard for any development project contract. The intention of such clauses is to ensure that Landholders don't inadvertently enter into multiple contracts with other projects that could have an onflow of technical and practical impacts to each individual project. An example would be where two electrical transmission projects cannot co-exist in close proximity to each other due to electrical interference of the opposing systems etc.

Where Landholders advise SOTS that they intend to also enter into an agreement with other electrical generation or transmission projects for the same property, SOTS will always seek to ensure both projects can safely co-exist on the land if that is the desired outcome for the Landholder. We have several examples where this has occurred and, in these situations, we have sought to enter into interface agreements with the other project developer.

SOTS does not expect Landholders to possess the technical capacity to assess the compatibility of other projects to SOTS. This is why our standard contracts require landholders to inform SOTS if they propose to enter into another similar contract on the land, so that all parties can assess whether it is possible for each development to go ahead concurrently.

SOTS Acquisition Manager David Murray is always available to discuss any queries CAG members have on our contract documentation if any further queries arise.