

Minutes

Community Advisory Group meeting #21

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4:00pm – 6:00pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2023-08-24
Location	Port Welshpool Coast Guard – Training Room; Lewis Street, Port Welshpool, VIC 3966		

Attendance

Members		Project team		Apologies
Ian Gibson (Chair)	Anne Roussac-Hoyne		Michael Dillon	Marcus McKenzie
Allan Rogers	Travis Dillow		Paul Johnson	Harry Mitchelson
Wendy Farmer	Glen McColl		Jason Pickering	Jenny Smith
Julianne Peavey	Jonathan Pintus			Peter Mooney
Nicki Jennings	Deb Lucas			Tony Cantwell
Tony Wolfe	Glenn Stagg			Nick Dudley
Jack Winterbottom	Jess Lee			Nina Barry-Macaulay
Darren McCubbin				
	*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 – Endorsement of minutes from CAG meeting #20 – Declaration of potential conflicts of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack raised that now with more offshore wind proponents there is potential for SOTS CAG members to be approached to sit on similar CAG groups for these other developments. Nicki offered that this could become more an issue of confidentiality than conflict of interest.

Item	Discussion points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wendy asked if being on the CAG for more than one project is a conflict of interest if you are not sharing information between the proponents outside of what is already publicly available. Wendy has already been asked to join an advisory group with another project and would like some clarification on this topic. – Darren added that he doesn't feel it is a conflict of interest outside of where it might be exploited for personal financial benefit from information gained in a private manner. <p>Action: 1. Paul acknowledged that all members sign a 'Terms of Reference' document which outlines a code of conduct and offered to discuss further with the chair offline.</p>
3	<p>What's happening on the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Refer to presentation for key updates. – Paul spoke of recent attended events and presentations delivered by the SOTS project team. – SOTS recently launched the latest SOTS publication, 'Making the move to offshore wind' at the SEC Energy Jobs and Skills Forum in Melbourne. <p>The guide has been well received and maps the transferability of roles for those working in the coal power and mining, offshore oil and gas and maritime industries who want to continue their career in offshore wind.</p>
4	<p>What's happening in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wendy Farmer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wendy shared that at next week's Gippsland New Energy Conference (GNEC) there will be a screening of the 'Power On' film on Saturday morning. The film depicts the renewable energy transition which is occurring across Gippsland and has been well received at previous screenings. – Wendy spoke of the TRANSFORM Expo to be held 13-14 October in the Gippsland Performing Arts Centre in Traralgon. Requests for Information stall holders and sponsors will ramp up after GNEC to avoid overwhelming or confusing stakeholders. There will be opportunities for suggested speakers and topics as well. Minister DiAmbrosio will attend and speak on the Friday night of the expo. – Friday the 13th will be primarily aimed at students and Saturday 14th for other attendees to learn of employment opportunities within the renewable energy industry. There will be a focus on connecting the attendees to where the jobs will be provided as we transition our energy production. – Julianne Peavey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Julieanne provided an update on the recent VicGrid community engagement session she attended at the Giffard West Hall. The session was well attended by the community. and was conducted in a different format. Roundtable discussions with five different topics enabled each attendee an opportunity to raise any queries directly on the topics of most interest. – Ian added that VicGrid still have their 'Draft Options Assessment' consultation period open until the 27th August and urged everyone to provide feedback promptly.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack has recently been birdwatching at Bass Canyon, which is around 1,000m deep and located some 90km offshore from Lakes Entrance. This location is near the edge of the continental shelf, and it's where you'll see offshore bird species different to the regular inshore species. Jack saw plenty of birds, but not too many different species. – Allan asked if these offshore bird species are likely to frequent the Star of the South Exploration Area which is 20-40m deep. Jack explained you might only see them by chance and very occasionally. That area would be more likely to have inshore or migratory species access it. – Nicki asked if other CAG members had the opportunity to read the paper 'Impacts on birds from offshore wind farms in Australia, 2022' by Reid, Baker, and Woehler, which was shared to the group after the previous meeting. She was interested to see the data presented around migratory birds avoiding offshore wind farms around the world. This leads to concern that with potential over-development and insufficient space between projects that migration patterns could be impacted. – Jack mentioned it might be appropriate to make Birds a focus topic for a future CAG. Paul responded our environmental assessments will not be ready for public exhibition until maybe the middle of next year, but it might be possible to have a colleague provide an update on progress of the bird studies undertaken.
5	Break
6	<p>Focus topic: Offshore Wind Supplier Showcase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Paul spoke of the Offshore Wind Supplier Showcase, scheduled for launch on Friday 1 September in Sale. This document was co-funded by the Victorian Government and captures a whole range of local suppliers that can support the offshore wind industry and highlights our local and domestic capability – including many First Nation businesses, and businesses owned within Gippsland, greater Victoria and finally nation-wide. – The document will become a valuable resource for not only the Star of the South project, but the entire industry. It should not be viewed as an all-inclusive or exhaustive list of businesses but is an accurate representation of the existing capabilities. – There are over 900 businesses featured in the 104-page document. Of those selected, SOTS and the consultants liaised with existing industry bodies to find out who their suppliers were and then we've asked who they supply to and what were their capabilities. – Questions from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nicki acknowledged there is going to be a huge demand for many services when approvals are granted, does SOTS feel that they have an advantage over others given the time invested and the work already done. Paul explained that SOTS was initially granted an Exploration Licence in 2019, and some of the studies or surveying other developers would be looking to commence are underway or completed. – Michael Dillion, SOTS Ports and Harbour Package Manager, also added that being a pioneer in any industry has its advantages and we are keen to maintain this lead, but it also means that much of the unavoidable process in negotiating things first time round can sometimes be streamlined for other proponents who follow.

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7	<p>Focus topic: Ports Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to presentation for key updates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michael Dillon, presented on the type and requirements of ports to deliver the Star of the South project. The types of Ports required are: <p>1. Construction Feeder Ports – This needs to be a deep-water port catering for large vessels with a deep draft. The Port is required to store and load/unload large offshore wind infrastructure components.</p> <p>2. Construction Management Ports / Operations and Maintenance Ports – Due to similar requirements, construction management and operations and maintenance ports are most likely to be at the same facility but could also be separate ports if required. Access is required for smaller vessels like crew transport vessels. This is where technicians and their equipment would mobilise from daily. SOTS would need to have a base with warehouse facilities, offices, communications, etc., at these ports.</p> - Our ports assessment process identified what industrial ports were currently available in Australia, and what could then be developed to service our project requirements. - SOTS met with existing ports, outlining our requirements and the offshore wind industry. We confirmed that there are currently no Australian ports set-up to service the offshore wind industry. - SOTS joined working groups with the ports and learned about their capabilities and what could be achieved with further development and upgrades, not only to service our project, but the entire industry. - Starting with a very wide search, we’ve now refined to offer further clarity to the community, regulators and different stakeholders about what ports are most likely to be utilised by the project. SOTS has not signed any agreements yet but has narrowed this down to potential ports. <p>Multiple ports are very much still under consideration - all require some level of development and would need to satisfy appropriate approvals and be ready when required.</p> - For construction feeder port, SOTS is aligned with the Victorian government that the Port of Hastings – the Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal, is well suited for the project. SOTS has nominated this as the primary option. It’s close to the project site, it will be a bespoke facility designed to meet industry requirements and importantly has a naturally occurring deep water channel. SOTS has also nominated Geelong Port and the Port of Bell Bay as secondary options. A combination of ports would be required for the duration of our construction phase. - For the construction management and operations and maintenance port, SOTS has narrowed the focus to two Gippsland ports - Barry Beach Marine Terminal and Port Anthony, and this is a long-term opportunity for 30 years plus. Both options are already established industrial ports and have experience in servicing the offshore oil and gas industry. The biggest restriction to these ports is that they only have a 6m water depth which precludes them as construction feeder ports which need 12m at a minimum to cater for the draft of the large construction vessels.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nicki asked of the potential for congestion at the construction ports with other proponents also needing access. Michael acknowledged that we are recommending that any construction is progressed over time to mitigate concerns over ports space, supply chain, workers, and vessels. Ideally one project could leave the construction feeder port and the next move in. – Nicki asked if onshore wind farm components are also delivered to ports. Michael answered yes, turbine components for Golden Plains Wind Farm were unloaded during this week at Geelong Port, so they have experience with this type of infrastructure, although it must be noted the offshore components are significantly larger. Nicki replied that will just add to the complexity of making this work, Michael agreed and stated that is why we are still considering multiple ports. We need to maintain some flexibility as the reality is we are competing with other ports users for a limited number of facilities. – Glenn asked if we have determined that Port of Hastings or Geelong Port could host more than one project at a time, and if not, who would be responsible for establishing a queue order. Michael said it would be difficult to have more than one project utilising ports with limited hard-stand storage at the same time, but there could potentially be some small overlap at the start and completion of multiple projects. SOTS strong preference is to have dedicated space and berths to eliminate interface overlapping issues. The best solution is to have consecutive projects and not award them all at the same time, but this will not be a SOTS decision. It's not just relevant to ports, its supply chain, workers, and vessels as well. – Nicki asked to reduce congestion could New South Wales ports be considered. Michael answered, "Yes and ports as far away as Newcastle could still be viable for other proponents". – Allan sought confirmation that the Gippsland ports will be utilised for the operations and maintenance phase of the project. Michael responded that is certainly what SOTS has narrowed its focus to, but again no agreements or contracts have yet been signed. This is an ideal opportunity for Gippsland and both ports are supportive. – Tony W. asked if the potential construction feeder ports will require any dredging to provide the minimum required depth of 12m. Michael responded that both Port of Hastings and Geelong Port have sufficient naturally occurring channel depth but may require localised dredging around the quay line or the berth where the vessel would berth alongside. Any dredging would need to be assessed as part of any approvals process. – Jack queried the anticipated development timeframe for the construction feeder port options. Michael responded Port of Hastings has the longest timeframe and needs to have a port ready by 2028 to meet the Government's renewable energy targets. It's important to remember these are separate port developments and not the responsibility of SOTS. – Allan asked how the port options compared to the typical travel distance of offshore wind projects in the northern hemisphere and their ports. Michael responded it's similar, but the biggest difference is that some of the components will likely be manufactured in Europe and that is obviously a long distance for the supply vessels to travel. For the offshore installation vessels, it's not far from Hastings, Geelong, or Bell Bay to the windfarm site and they can also install 3-5

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	<p>turbines each trip. SOTS want to be closer for the operations and maintenance phase as they are the daily trips for workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ken Fraser added that the two Gippsland ports are adjacent to each other and are surrounded by the most significant parcel of unused industrial zoned land in South Gippsland and that South Gippsland Shire Council see this as an asset to support proposed offshore wind ports operations within the area. Naturally there are approvals processes that would need to be adhered to, but there is great opportunity available for South Gippsland. Importantly we must also acknowledge that there will be a decommissioning phase of the existing oil and gas industry that will be utilising these ports too. – Glen pointed out that referring to the construction period as short-term opportunities for workers isn't entirely accurate as with a staggered approach to rolling out these projects and there will be opportunity to move from one to another at completion. The timeframe could be over 10-20 years. Michael responded that this assumption is likely correct, although we can only speak to the SOTS project and employment opportunities.
8	<p>Other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Carrajung Estate Winery has been considered for our CAG End of Year break up on December 14, we will keep you updated with any progression. – We are also proposing a CAG site visit to both Gippsland Ports discussed today – Barry Beach Marine Terminal and Port Anthony, we will keep you updated.
9	Meeting close

Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	<p>Ian, Paul, and Jason to further discuss any potential conflict of interest or confidentiality concerns if CAG members are performing this role for more than one project.</p> <p>Response – SOTS and the CAG Chair acknowledge and are comfortable that members might be approached to perform advisory or community information sharing roles with other organisations given each member's knowledge and experience. Members have been respectful of the CAG's Terms of Reference document signed upon commencing as a member and continue to act confidentially with project information deemed commercial-in-confidence.</p>	Paul	29/09/2023

Next meeting

Date	Time	Place
Friday 6 October 2023 - Gippsland Ports site visits (CAG#22)	1 - 3 pm	Barry Road, Agnes, Victoria, 3962
Wednesday 15 November (CAG#23)	4 - 6pm	Yarram, Venue TBC

Questions taken on notice