



Overview of the Proposed Area - Gippsland, Victoria

An area off Gippsland, Victoria is being considered for possible offshore renewable energy projects, such as wind energy.

Starting the conversation

This is your first opportunity to provide feedback.

Developers must also seek feedback on their projects and demonstrate how they will share the area with existing users.

The benefits of offshore renewable energy

The Australian Government has set a target of net zero emissions by 2050 and is looking to reduce emissions by 43%, and reach 82 per cent of Australia's electricity generated from renewable sources, by 2030.

Offshore renewable energy projects off Gippsland can help the Australian Government meet these targets. The Gippsland region is well suited for potential projects, particularly offshore wind, because:

- It has strong, consistent winds.
- It is close to electricity markets and existing connections to the grid.
- Industry is very interested in developing projects in the area.
- The Victorian Government has prioritised the area for development of an offshore wind industry.

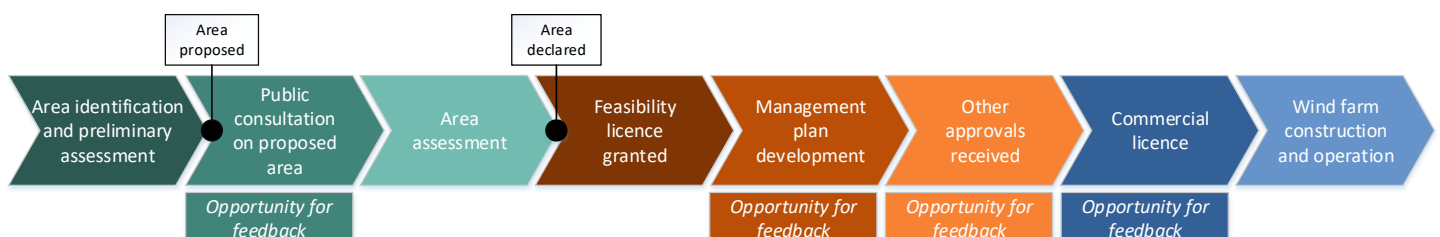
Gippsland offshore wind projects can help decarbonise the economy with year-round clean energy generation and drive regional jobs growth, with a need for skills in engineering and construction, as well strong transferable skills from other sectors including high-voltage electrical, logistics and offshore work.

The offshore renewable energy process

The Minister for Climate Change and Energy has proposed an area in the Commonwealth waters off Gippsland, Victoria for offshore renewable energy projects, such as offshore wind. Consultation on this proposal is now open and we seek your feedback on the proposal and how offshore renewable energy projects could share the area with other users and interests.

The construction, maintenance and ongoing operations of offshore renewable energy projects must maximise integration and support of the local Gippsland economy.

This is your first opportunity to provide feedback. Developers are required to seek feedback on their projects and must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator, how they will share the area with existing users. A process diagram, with consultation points identified, is provided below.



Once the consultation period has ended, the Minister will consider all submissions and the potential impacts offshore renewable energy projects may have on other users and interests. Your feedback will help inform the Minister’s decision on whether the proposed area is suitable for offshore renewable energy.

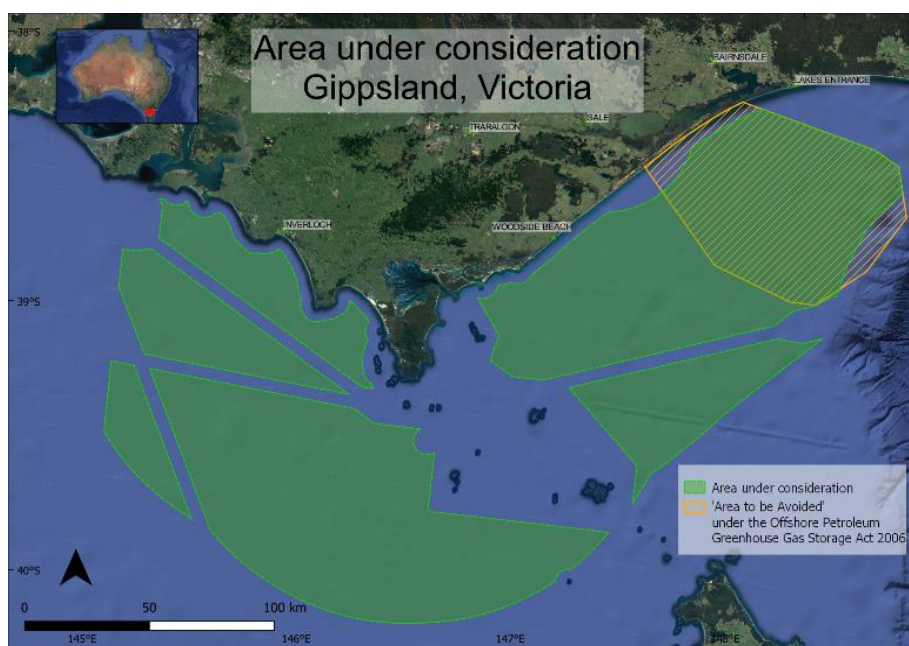
If the Minister declares the area, and feasibility licences are granted, developers will be allowed to investigate an area and begin planning their project. During the feasibility licence period, which is up to 7 years, developers must develop a management plan. As part of the preparation of these plans, **developers will need to consult with the local community and demonstrate how they will share the area with other users**. Licence holders will also need to have a plan for gathering and responding to ongoing feedback from stakeholders throughout the life of the project.

The management plan must be approved by the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator before an application for a commercial licence can be granted. Before deciding whether to grant a commercial licence, **the Minister may require the developer to conduct specific kinds of consultation**. Developers must also ensure they have received all other relevant approvals, and undertake any other consultation processes, before they can apply for a commercial licence. This includes environmental approvals. If the commercial licence is granted, which is for a period of 40 years, the construction of the wind farm can commence.

The area under consideration

An area off the coast of Gippsland, Victoria is being proposed for future offshore renewable energy projects.

In defining the boundaries a number of factors have been considered, including feedback received from Commonwealth and Victorian Government agencies, and technical limitations identified in the Blue Economy CRC report into Offshore Wind in Australia.



The 'Area to be Avoided' indicates a high concentration of existing offshore oil and gas titles.

The area is broken into a number of smaller sections. This is because high vessel traffic areas, Restricted Defence Areas and the Beagle Marine Park have been excluded.

Some sections of the area may not be suitable for some offshore renewable energy activities because of high biodiversity and environmental constraints. Approval under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) is required for all prospective projects. This includes an assessment of the relevant impacts and proposed avoidance, management, mitigation and, where appropriate, offset measures, to demonstrate appropriate environmental outcomes can be achieved.

The Beagle Australian Marine Park is outside, but next to, the area. The Director of National Parks will determine if development activities may have an impact on the values of the Park and whether effective mitigation measures may be required.

Offshore renewable energy off Gippsland - Sharing the area

The Gippsland region

The Bidwell-Maap, Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples are the Traditional Owners of the land in the broader Gippsland region, and have been for thousands of years.

The region is renowned for its natural attractions. From beaches and rainforests, to snowfields and hiking trails. It is home to the iconic Wilsons' Promontory, the Gippsland Lakes, the Strzelecki Ranges and Ninety Mile Beach. Gippsland boasts a wealth of natural resources and commodities, with key industry sectors such as agriculture, fishing, forestry, dairy, mining, oil and gas extraction and tourism, which supports around 10% of the region's employment.

Historically, energy generation in Gippsland has been closely linked to coal. However, the focus is shifting to renewable energy and the role it could play as the region transitions away from coal-fired electricity generation.

Future offshore renewable energy projects must demonstrate how they will share the area with existing users and interests.

Marine users and interests

The Australian Government wants to manage the offshore marine environment in a way that recognises all users and balances competing interests. **Future offshore renewable energy projects must share the area with other users and interests.**

For detailed information on existing users and interests in the vicinity of the area, please read *Marine Users and Interests – Gippsland, Victoria*.

Offshore renewable energy projects have operated in Europe for many years, including the North Sea. Learnings from these regions has shown that offshore wind may benefit local interests. The installation of wind turbines may increase fish stocks by functioning as fish nurseries and could increase tourist numbers by attracting sightseers and recreational fishers to the area.

As with any infrastructure in the marine environment (such as navigation buoys, and oil and gas platforms), there may be restricted areas placed around offshore renewable infrastructure, such as individual wind turbines and offshore substations. These restricted areas are to ensure the safety of offshore workers and other users of the marine environment, and to protect the infrastructure from damage. There may be larger restricted areas while any approved offshore wind projects are under construction to ensure safety for marine users and construction workers. The exact details of these restricted areas will be determined on a project-by-project basis.

We have developed a [map](#) that allows users to interact with the Gippsland area under consideration and geographic information relevant to other users and interests in the area. Other tools, visualisations and data relevant to Offshore Renewable Energy in Australian waters are also available on the [Australian Marine Spatial Information System](#) portal.

Provide your feedback

This is your first opportunity to provide feedback.

We want your feedback on the proposal and how offshore renewable energy projects could share the area with other users and interests. We encourage your feedback through a submission in our [Consultation Hub](#). Your feedback will help inform the Minister's decision on whether the proposed area is suitable for offshore renewable energy.

Your feedback must be provided through the Consultation Hub by the submissions deadline.

We understand that the visibility of wind turbines may be of particular interest to local communities. This may be especially so if there are multiple offshore wind projects in the area. While the exact locations of future projects are not yet known, we encourage you to make a submission if you have suggestions as to how visual impacts could be managed.

We want to make sure everyone understands the proposal and process for providing feedback. We will be running a series of information sessions virtually, and in person across the Gippsland region.

Further Information

For more information on the area under consideration off Gippsland, Victoria, please read *Supporting Information for the Region – Gippsland, Victoria*.

For information on the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* please visit the [Establishing offshore renewable energy infrastructure web page](#). If you have any questions, you can [email our team](#).