

MINUTES

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #32

Chair	Ian Gibson	Time	4 pm – 6 pm
Minutes	Jason Pickering	Date	2025-04-03
Location	Bond Street Event Centre, Sale VIC		

Attendees

CAG Members	CAG Members	Project Team	Apologies
Ian Gibson	Glen McColl	Briana Dowling	Travis Dillow
Cr Catherine Bannerman	Harry Mitchelson	Robert Goodchild	Peter Mooney
Tony Cantwell	Jonathon Pintus	Paul Johnson	Julianne Peavey
Nick Dudley	Anne Roussac-Hoyne	Jason Pickering	Allan Rogers
Wendy Farmer	Jenny Smith		
Ken Fraser	Glenn Staggs		
Nicki Jennings	Jack Winterbottom		
Deb Lucas	Tony Wolfe		
Darren McCubbin			

Key discussion points

Item	Outline
1	<p>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</p> <p>Standing items and actions from previous meeting</p> <p>Focus topic: Southerly Ten Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) approvals update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to presentation for key updates <p>Briana Dowling – Lead, EIA Communications & Engagement</p> <p>Robert Goodchild – Sen. Manager, Environment & Approval (marine)</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicki asked whether there is any overlap between seabird and shorebird species in and around the project area. Robert explained there is because specific species utilise both zones. Darren asked if the data from operational offshore wind farms overseas indicate whether bird strikes are a major issue. Robert answered that studies from overseas are showing a high level of avoidance behaviour from birds. Jack commented that while there are no existing offshore wind farms in Australia, and thinking of our endemic species, how will Star of the South model the expected behaviour of those birds. Robert explained there will

typically be some uncertainty to reactions from species endemic to only that area, but Star of the South can refer to the phylogenetic tree to determine the most closely related species from the northern hemisphere where there are many projects for comparisons. This comparison will help identify and model potential behavioural change or reaction to any proposed offshore installation here in Australia.

- Nick asked if migratory patterns and flight heights have been considered for the smaller, passerine bird species that also migrate between Tasmania and the mainland each year. Robert explained the studies are guided by known flight paths, and literature and evidence relating to all bird movements for that region – with that in mind, those species would be considered within the project’s assessments.
- Glenn asked Robert what the most common turbine foundation in the Northern Hemisphere is. Robert explained that monopiles are the most used foundation type which is the foundation type proposed for the Star of the South project. Foundation type is typically dictated by the geotechnics or the seabed conditions and the water depth of the project site. Glenn asked how long the piling of each foundation will take. Robert answered that installation durations and depths are site specific but, in his experience, the average percussive drive time of each foundation was around two and a half hours to a depth of around 30 metres.

3 Break

What’s happening on the project

- 4 – [Refer to presentation for key updates](#)

Paul spoke of recent events and presentations delivered by the project team.

What’s happening in the community

Community updates, open to all members.

- Darren informed that Gippsland Climate Change Network is partnering with consultancy Democracy Co to engage within the coastal communities from Loch Sport to Inverloch. The project will coordinate 50 people through blind selection into a forum or assembly who’ll be presented with information about offshore wind. The group will then be asked questions about the benefits generated from the offshore wind and asked for their priorities. For example, environmental outcomes, local community improvements or a community benefit scheme etc.

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The Democracy Co work is scheduled to begin around June, and the aim is to get a coalescence of understanding of what people want out of this energy transformation. Findings will be summarised in a report and released publicly.

- Wendy shared that ‘Nannas Against Nuclear’ had begun meeting weekly in Traralgon each Tuesday for two hours and have had some fantastic community conversations.
- Nicki shared that Better Transmission Gippsland continue to advocate for underground transmission infrastructure to the Latrobe Valley.

Brief focus topic: Community research overview – Star of the South

- [Refer to presentation for key updates](#)

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Paul provided an overview of market research phone surveys of 400 Gippsland residents conducted from 21 November – 4 December 2024. Half of the respondents were from coastal communities and the other half from the broader community.

Other business

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- Next meeting – CAG #33, Wednesday 28 May 2025 in Yarram

8 Meeting close

Actions

No.	Action	Owner	Due
1	<p>To circulate studies referenced by Briana during the meeting which have investigated bird avoidance behaviour. The follow information was provided to CAG members following the meeting on 4 April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Emerging evidence from studies from across Europe have shown that collisions at offshore wind farms are rare and significantly lower than the modelled forecasts. – A study from the Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm (also known as the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC)) in Scotland analysed 10,000+ bird flights over a two-year period of video recordings and no collisions or narrow escapes were recorded. Similar results have been found at other offshore wind farms including the Tahkoluoto Wind Farm in Finland in which 30 months of monitoring found no collisions. – This is considered likely due to the avoidance ability and behaviour of seabirds who adjusted their flight behaviour to avoid flying through the entire wind farm, the individual turbines or the rotating blades. – The Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm study showed that seabirds’ avoidance response towards turbines mainly takes place within 100-120 m distance from the turbines, and that the response intensifies as the seabirds approach the rotor blades. Some birds, such as Gannets appeared to fly lower and below the turbine blades, whereas other species, such as herring gulls and kittiwakes, tended to increase their flight height as they approached the turbines and flew over the blades. – The study concluded that ‘seabirds in most weather and turbulence conditions will be exposed to very low risks of collision in offshore wind farms.’ 	Paul	4 April 2025

[€3 million research project reveals how seabirds avoid offshore wind farms - Vattenfall](#)

[Modelling flight heights of marine birds to more accurately assess collision risk with offshore wind turbines - Johnston - 2014 - Journal of Applied Ecology - Wiley Online Library](#)

[Pioneering study finds seabirds avoid offshore wind turbines much more than previously predicted | The Carbon Trust](#)

[New Report: No Recorded Collisions Between Floating Offshore Wind Turbine and Birds – Norwegian Offshore Wind](#)

Questions taken on notice

No.	Action	Owner	Due
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