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Subject: New submission from EIS Submission
Attachments: Submission-in-Support-of-the-Star-of-the-South-Environmental-Impact-Statement-.docx; Submission-in-Support-of-the-Star-of-the-South-Environmental-Impact-Statement-1.docx

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No

Your Details

Name

Stephen WARD

Address

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

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TO: The Star of the South Assessment Team

SUBJECT: Submission in Support of the Star of the South Environmental Impact Statement [EIS]

FROM: Stephen D Ward

DATE: 6 June 4, 2026

I am writing to register my committed advocacy for the Star of the South offshore wind farm project. As a community member and advocate for renewable energy, I believe the project provides an outstanding model for Australia's transition to renewable energy in general and for off shore wind development in particular.

1. GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT

I have followed the project since it commenced in 2017, attending many of its community information sessions and receiving excellent documentation on its progress through:

- i. The extensive wind resource monitoring and marine/seabed studies
- ii. The scoping and review process for its underground route planning

I would like to comment briefly on the following factors for which I hold the Star of the South project in such high esteem.

1.1. Community Education and Engagement

This has been a feature of the project from its commencement.

The Star of the South has conducted public forums and provided project information such as fact sheets, newsletters, maps, and videos to help the public understand the project.

The project team's public forums and information sessions engage local communities, addressing concerns and gathering feedback on the project's potential impacts.

Community Advisory Groups have been established, which include local residents, business owners, and environmental representatives to ensure that community interests are considered in the planning process.

1.2. The Model That the Project Sets for Future Developments

The Star of the South offshore project serves as a pioneering example in the renewable energy landscape, offering valuable insights into the economic, environmental, and technological aspects of offshore wind development. By analysing its successes and challenges, future projects will be better equipped to contribute to a sustainable energy future

1.3. The Collaboration and Negotiation with Stakeholders and Experts

This has been an important contribution to the success of the project as demonstrated by

- i. The Community Engagement referred to above

- ii. Collaboration and negotiation with state and federal governments to navigate regulatory requirements, securing necessary permits, and ensuring compliance with environmental standards.
- iii. Engaging environmental scientists to conduct rigorous assessments, ensuring that the project minimizes ecological disruption and adheres to sustainability practices.
- iv. Partnering with engineering and technology firms on advancements in wind turbine technology and offshore construction techniques.
- v. Collaborating with Indigenous groups to assess cultural heritage sites and ensure their protection throughout the project lifecycle.

1.4. The Contribution to the Transition to Renewable Energy

The Star of the South project is expected to generate up to 2.2 GW of renewable energy, which could power approximately 1.5 million homes. This significant delivery of reliable and base load style energy to the grid will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

2. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The project has demonstrated a commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability and conducted an extensive survey of the marine environment of the proposed location of its turbines.

The survey covered:

- i. Coastal processes and sediment transport
- ii. Benthic ecology
- iii. Fish and invertebrates
- iv. Marine mammals and turtles
- v. Off-shore ornithology and bats
- vi. Marine protected areas

Examples of the engagement of technical experts in the survey and associated research include:

- i. Curtin University on underwater noise research
- ii. Daikin University which tagged and researched local seabird and fur seal populations to determine their foraging ranges
- iii. Monash University on recording local seabird flight heights and tracking great white sharks
- iv. CSIRO on marine surveys

The environmental stewardship of the Star of the South and its collaboration with specialist organizations is demonstrated in the following off-shore and marine protection strategies.

2.1. The Siting of the Turbines

The foundations for the turbines have been positioned to completely avoid sensitive habitats on the seabed, to protect local fish nurseries and benthic organisms, plants, animals and microbes that live on, in, or near the bottom of Bass Strait

2.2. Marine Mammal Controls

The project will implement mitigation and monitoring measures designed to reduce the chance of injuring, disturbing or displacing whales and dolphins.

The project's construction management framework requires specialized underwater noise reduction technologies and strict mammal exclusion zones to prevent acoustic disturbances.

The bubble curtain is a key technique, which involves creating a barrier of bubbles in the water around the turbines to deter whales and dolphins entering the area. The technique involves:

- i. Bubble generation by pumping air through a series of perforated pipes/hoses along the seabed that create a continuous wall of bubbles.
- ii. Sound vibration created by the movement of the bubbles

2.3. Birdlife Protection

The Star of the South has set the lower tip of the turbine blades at a minimum height of 35 metres above the waterline [An increase from the 25 metres] This design will reduce the risk of collisions for migrating seabirds, including Albatross, by up to 70%

2.4. Underwater Construction Noise

The project identified that the underwater noise emissions from the impact piling of the turbines and off-shore substation foundations has the potential to impact on cetaceans and other marine fauna during the construction phase.

A comprehensive range of mitigation measures are planned to manage this underwater construction noise.

The measures also specifically minimize the likelihood of hearing impairment or behaviour disturbance from underwater noise on the Southern Right Whale and Blue Whales

2.5. The Physical Presence of the Project Infrastructure During the Operational Phase

This has the potential to disrupt the natural movement patterns [barrier effect] of seabirds and marine mammals or cause them to avoid the area [displacement].

The Star of the South has committed to a minimum spacing of 1,062 metres between turbines and reduced the number of turbines from originally up to 400 to a maximum of 147, to minimize the potential impacts

2.6. Invasive Marine Species

To minimize the risk of introducing or translocating invasive marine species, all project vessels will comply with Commonwealth and State biosecurity requirements.

CONCLUSION

The exemplary environmental impact assessment and the specific, research based design mitigation strategies such as those outlined above, is proof that a large scale off-shore wind renewable energy infrastructure can coexist with the sensitive coastal and marine environments in which it will be constructed and operate.

I strongly support the project and urge the assessment Panel to approve the Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to contribute to the assessment process and considering this submission

Yours Sincerely

Stephen D Ward

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