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Are you making this submission on behalf of someone else and/or an organisation?

No

Your Details

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Your Submission

****Submission Opposing the Star of the South Project – Victorian Works****

I object to the proposed Victorian components of the Star of the South Project due to the significant and potentially irreversible

environmental impacts on Victoria's marine and coastal environments.

While renewable energy is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the environmental costs of this proposal have not been demonstrated to be acceptable, particularly given the ecological sensitivity of the Gippsland coastline and adjacent marine habitats. The precautionary principle should apply where there is scientific uncertainty about impacts to biodiversity and ecosystem function.

The proposed installation of up to eight export cables through Victorian waters and the associated shore crossing works at Reeves Beach would require substantial disturbance of marine and coastal environments. Construction activities, seabed disturbance, trenching, drilling and cable installation have the potential to damage benthic habitats, alter sediment movement, increase turbidity and affect species that depend on these environments for feeding, breeding and migration.

Of particular concern is the potential impact on marine protected areas and ecologically significant habitats. Disturbance during construction may affect marine mammals, fish populations, seabirds and other protected species through underwater noise, vibration and habitat disruption. Even temporary impacts can have long-lasting consequences where species are already under pressure from climate change, overfishing and cumulative industrial development.

The shore crossing and underground cable corridor also pose risks to coastal ecosystems. Reeves Beach and surrounding areas support important dune systems, native vegetation and wildlife habitat. Construction and maintenance activities could result in vegetation loss, soil disturbance, erosion and habitat fragmentation. Once ecological integrity is compromised, restoration outcomes are often uncertain and may take decades to achieve, if they are achievable at all.

The Environmental Effects Statement relies heavily on mitigation and management measures to reduce environmental harm. However, mitigation should not be treated as a guarantee that impacts will be avoided. Environmental management plans are only effective if impacts are accurately predicted and can be controlled in practice. Given the scale and complexity of the proposed works, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding actual environmental outcomes.

There is also insufficient consideration of cumulative impacts. The Gippsland region is facing increasing pressure from multiple energy, infrastructure and industrial developments. Environmental assessments that consider projects in isolation risk underestimating the combined effects on biodiversity, habitat connectivity and ecosystem resilience.

For these reasons, I am not satisfied that the environmental impacts of the Victorian works have been adequately avoided or reduced to an acceptable level. The potential harm to marine habitats, coastal ecosystems, protected species and ecological processes outweighs the claimed benefits of the proposal.

I therefore request that the Inquiry recommend against approval of the Victorian components of the Star of the South Project unless it can be clearly demonstrated that significant environmental impacts can be avoided entirely and that Victoria's marine and coastal environments will be protected for future generations.

Submission Declaration

✓ This submission does not contain any material that could be regarded as defamatory or offensive to any person

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