

# Preparing for offshore wind project assessments - a State perspective

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Photo credit: <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/offshore-wind-energy/wind-turbine-visualisationsov.au>

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where we gather today, the lands of the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples and we pay respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge First Peoples' deep connections with Country and Sea Country as original custodians and acknowledge their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture.



# Introductions

The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) administers the state's EIA system under the:

- *Environment Effects Act 1978* and
- Victoria's Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth under the EPBC Act.

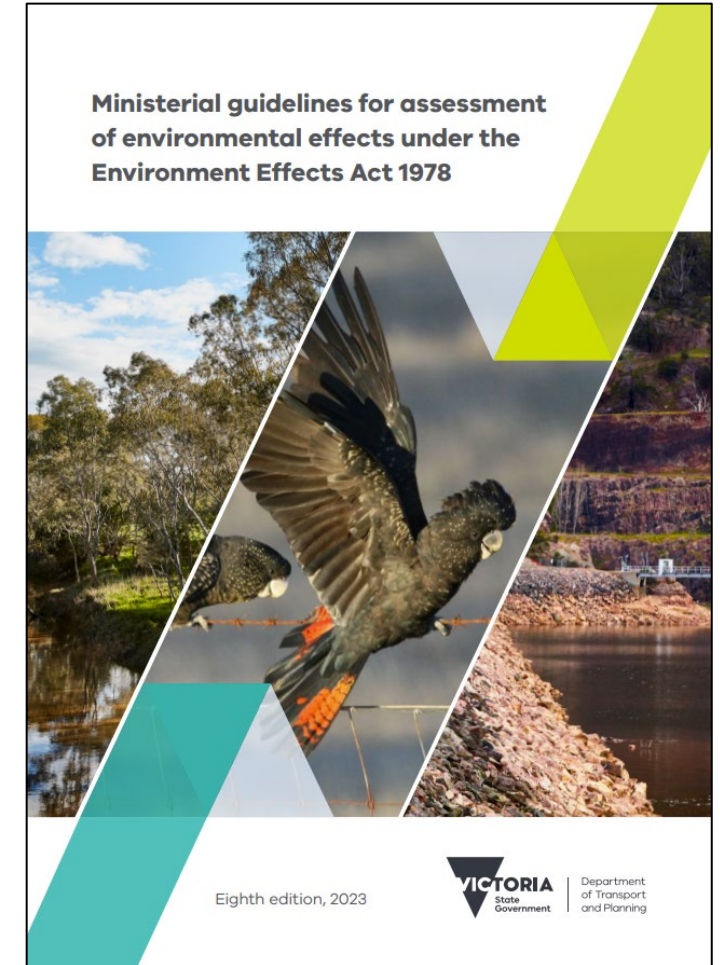
## Our role

The **DTP Impact Assessment Unit** implements Victoria's legislative framework for Impact Assessment on behalf of the Minister for Planning.

The Environment Effects Act provides for the highest level of environmental assessment in Victoria.

Applies to proposed projects with potential for “significant effects” on the environment.

*Definition of environment is broad - includes biophysical, cultural & socio-economic.*



# Key outcomes

- Provide a brief overview of offshore wind policy and development in Victoria.
- Develop an understanding of the assessment approach for offshore wind projects in Victoria.
- Learn how the State and Commonwealth governments have been working together to adopt an aligned approach to multi-jurisdictional assessments.
- Share some reflections on working across jurisdictions and other initiatives to address current gaps.



Photo credit: Geoff Ralphs

# Victoria's offshore wind program

Offshore wind energy is a key pillar of Victoria's electricity transition plan to secure renewable energy supply and achieve climate action targets.

In March 2024, the Victorian Government legislated Victoria's first offshore wind targets.

At least

**2GW**

**2032**

**4GW**

**2035**

**9GW**

**2040**

- Achieving net-zero emissions by 2045
- Enabling energy resilience
- Supporting Victorian jobs and industries



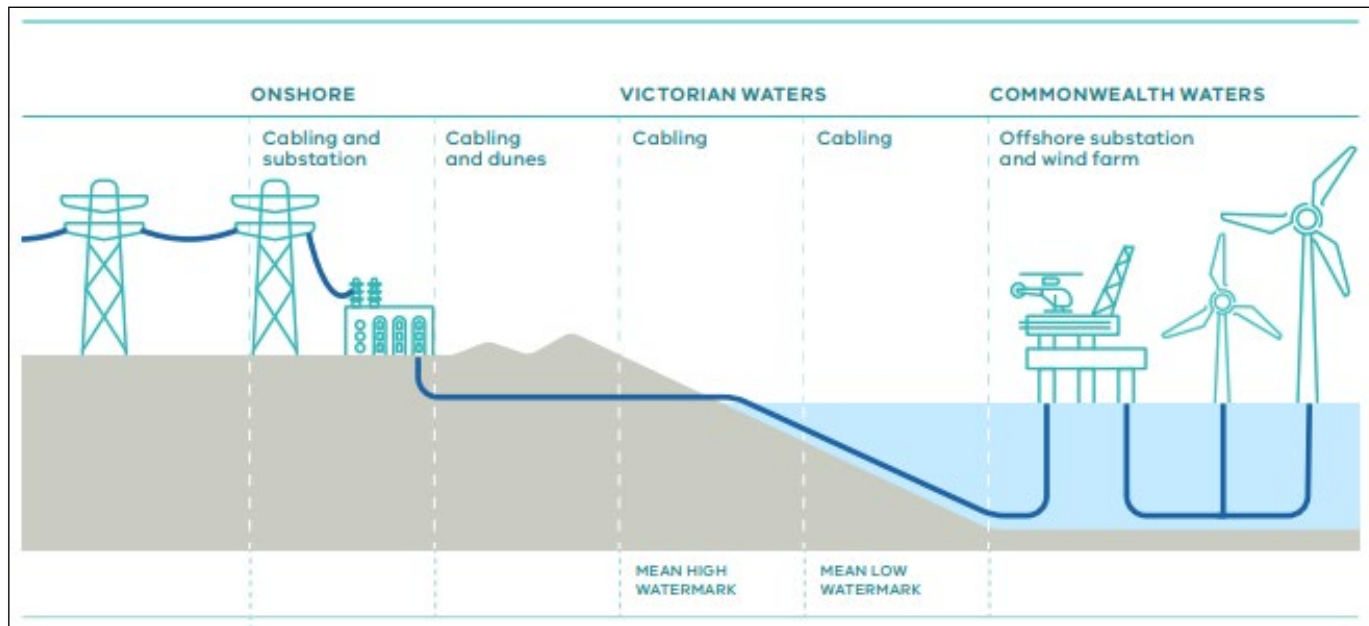


# Gippsland declared area

Twelve feasibility licences totalling 25 GW have been issued by the Commonwealth Government

- 1.Parkwind/ Beach Energy - *Blue Mackerel North*
- 2.Ocean Winds - *High Sea Wind Project North*
- 3.Mainstream, Direct, Reventus, AGL - *Gippsland Skies*
- 4.Orsted - *Gippsland 1*
- 5.Southerly Ten\* - *Kut-Wut Brataualung*
- 6.Southerly Ten\* and CBUS - *Star of the South*
- 7.Bluefloat - *Gippsland Dawn*
- 8.RWE Renewables - *Kent Offshore Wind*
- 9.Orsted - *Gippsland 2*
- 10.Corio Generation - *Great Eastern Offshore Wind*
- 11.Origin & RES - *Navigator North*
- 12.Iberdrola - *Aurora Green*

# Overview of environmental assessments and approvals



Source: Offshore Wind Implementations Statement 1.

## Victorian:

- *Environment Effects Act 1978*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

## Commonwealth:

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*

# Assessments in the marine environment

- When projects/actions are located within Victoria (i.e. solely or large majority), the **bilateral assessment agreement** enables Commonwealth matters to be assessed through accredited Victorian processes.
- Proposals that cross Victorian and Commonwealth waters however will be assessed by both jurisdictions.
- For these projects, the bilateral assessment agreement requires that:

*“..the parties will consult and use their best endeavours to reach agreement with other affected jurisdictions on an appropriate assessment process” Bilat: 4.2(b)”*

*“We also recognise that the regulatory landscape in Australia is unique and requires cooperation between the Victorian and Commonwealth Government. Victoria is the first jurisdiction in Australia to establish an offshore wind industry and will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to deliver an aligned, efficient, and harmonised approvals and regulatory process.”*

**The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Victorian Offshore Wind Implementation Statement 1**



# Multi-jurisdictional assessment

**The Commonwealth and Victorian governments have been working together to:**

- Avoid duplicating technical studies and documents
- Make the assessment efficient for the proponent and regulators
- Make it easier for the public to engage with and comment on a combined EIS/EES

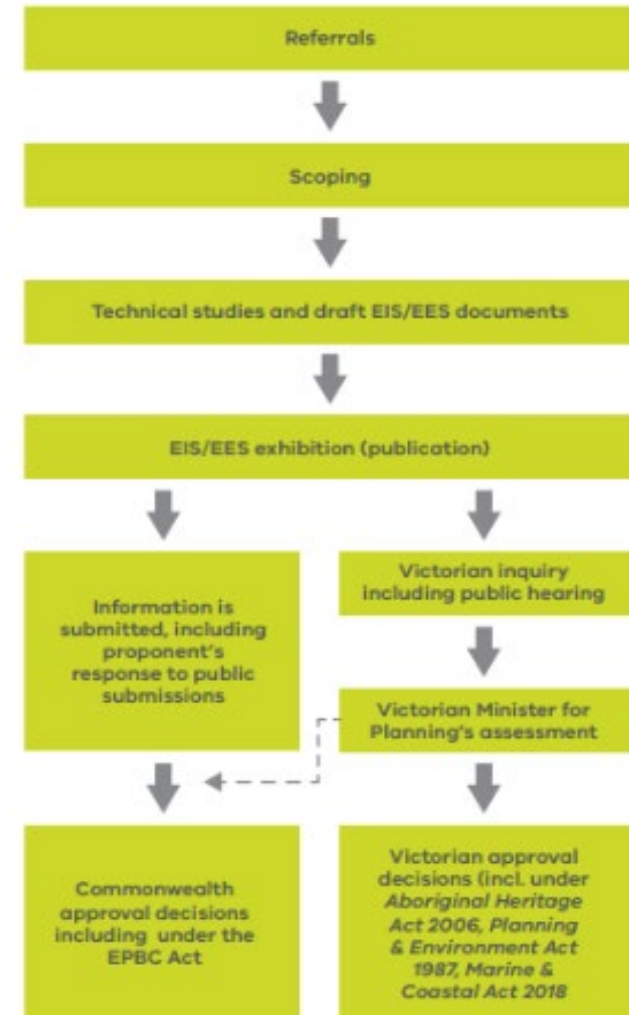


# Coordinated assessment process

## Examples of how we work together:

- Proponents to refer their project at the same time
- Scoping - seek consistency in EIS and EES scoping documents
- A single set of assessment documents - enable preparation of a combined EIS/EES
- Align process timeframes - for scoping and EIS/EES public exhibition
- Coordinated agency engagement - Commonwealth, State and local agencies participate in the one technical reference group during EIS/EES preparation
- Public enabled to make a submission on the EIS, EES or both through the same platform.

## STEPS



# How we have implemented this in practice

## What have we learnt?

- Deep dive and map out each process's steps and requirements
- Opportunities/limitations for aligning process steps
- Required a high level of collaboration between regulators and proponent
- Mariner Link project EIS/EES (recently on exhibition) provides us with a template that can be used for future multi-jurisdictional projects, with a combined EIS-EES.
- Star of the South is developing a combined EIS-EES.

### Mariner Link Project

Have your say on the combined Commonwealth Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Victorian Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed Mariner Link Project.

REVIEWING FEEDBACK

🕒 CLOSED 12 JULY 2024

### Star of the South Offshore Wind Farm

Learn more about the Star of the South offshore wind farm

# Other initiatives to address assessment challenges

## Policy gaps:

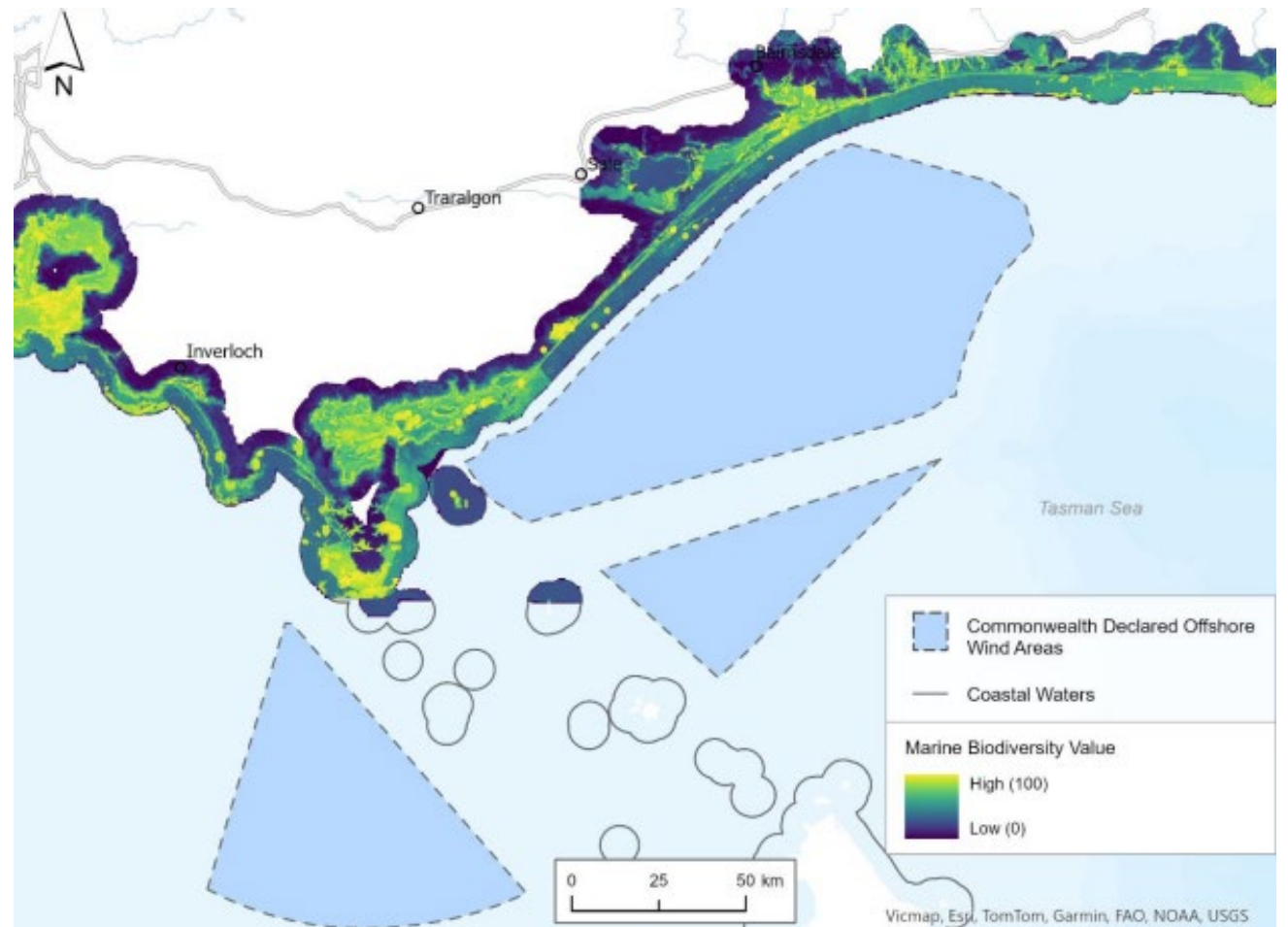
- Biodiversity survey standards
- Mitigation measures
- Significant impact criteria

## Scientific uncertainty:

- Migration routes for Bass Strait migrants
- Cumulative impacts
- Collision risk modelling

## Traditional Owner partnerships:

- Traditional owners cultural and legal rights
- Assessment of submerged landscapes



## Concluding remarks

We are administering assessments of offshore wind projects off the coast of Victoria and getting ready to administer several in the next few years.

Supported by a State policy environment and a collaborative working relationship with our Commonwealth partners.



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