High Sea Wind Geophysical and Geotechnical Offshore Investigations

Application Number: **03021** Commencement Date: **30/07/2025** Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

High Sea Wind Geophysical and Geotechnical Offshore Investigations

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Energy Generation and Supply (renewable)

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

Wind Farm

1.1.4 Estimated start date *

01/12/2025

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

01/04/2031

1.2 Proposed Action details

1.2.1 Provide an overview of the proposed action, including all proposed activities. *

In April 2004, Ocean Winds, a joint venture by EDP Renewables and ENGIE, was granted a feasibility licence (FL-002) through its bidding company, High Sea Wind Pty Ltd. The feasibility licence allows Ocean Winds to assess the viability of an approximately 150 km2 area to develop a bottom-fixed offshore wind farm in the Gippsland, Victoria declared offshore wind area (Declared Area OEI-01-2022). The exclusively Ocean Winds-owned project, named High Sea Wind, aims to deliver at least 1.3 gigawatts of power generation to Victoria.

Offshore geophysical and geotechnical investigations are required to better understand the geology, sediments and seabed conditions of the area where project infrastructure may be placed. These investigations would be undertaken within the 'activity area' presented in **Attachment A: Project Area Map** in a series of campaigns between 1 December 2025 and 1 April 2031. The specific timing of the activities will be established following the confirmation of approvals and the procurement of equipment. All proposed activities in the nearshore area within the Southern Right Whale (SRW) Biologically Important Area (BIA) and 3 km buffer area will be undertaken between 31 October and 1 May the following year to avoid operating during the southern right whale reproductive season, when southern right whales may occur along the coastal stretch of the activity area.

The survey campaigns, termed the High Sea Wind Geophysical and Geotechnical Offshore Investigations (the proposed action), will inform the design, installation methods, and operations of the High Sea Wind project and any impact mitigation requirements. The activity area encompasses the area for design and installation studies within the High Sea Wind feasibility licence area and an area extending from the feasibility licence area to the cable shoreline crossing where the potential export cable route will be investigated as shown in **Attachment A: Project Area Map**. The campaigns will therefore involve offshore and nearshore surveys in the activity area.

The purpose of the proposed action is to obtain information to understand the seabed and subsurface conditions in the activity area, specifically the location of potential hazards or seabed features that could influence the positioning of project infrastructure, or require protection, such as craters, shipwrecks, First Nations underwater cultural heritage and reefs. The surveys will also provide information on the geological and engineering properties of the seabed to determine the ground conditions and ensure the stability, safety, and cost-effectiveness of the High Sea Wind project.

The project area is approximately in 981,000 ha (9,810 km2) in extent (see **Attachment A: Project Area Map**) and spans Victorian marine waters and Commonwealth waters (with 376.81 km2 and 5,840.4 km2 of the activity area located in Victorian state and Commonwealth waters respectively).

The project area includes:

- Activity area of approximately 617,360 ha (6,173.6 km2)
- Potential disturbance footprint of 363,740 ha (3,637.4 km2), comprising a ten kilometre buffer around the activity area
- Avoidance footprint, comprising the Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park plus a one kilometre buffer of 5,028 ha (50.28 km2).

The boundary coordinates of the project area (and its components parts) are provided as **Attachment B: Project Area Coordinates.** Further detail on the project area, and the delineation of the offshore and nearshore activity areas within it, is provided in **section 3.1, pages 12-13 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

An overview of the proposed action is provided below, with a full account of the methods and technical specifications for each activity provided in **section 1.4, pages 3-4 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

1. The proposed action will comprise geophysical and geotechnical investigations.
2. Geophysical investigations

Offshore geophysical surveys use acoustic methods and passive sensors to detect and image underwater objects and bathymetric features across the seafloor. Data analysis of geophysical surveys can also detect the potential for underwater cultural heritage to be present. The activities for the geophysical investigations will involve the use of the following equipment within the activity area:

- A surface vessel, which may be crewed or uncrewed, equipped with:
    - Multi-beam echo sounder (MBES)
    - Side scan sonar (SSS)
    - Ultra-high-resolution seismic (UHRS) (only for the survey of the High Sea Wind feasibility licence area)
    - Sub-bottom profiler (SBP) (either chirp, parametric SBP, sparker or boomer)
    - Magnetometer.

1. Geotechnical investigations
2. The purpose of the geotechnical investigations is to collect information and physical samples of the seabed within the activity area to inform ground conditions such as strength, composition, and stability. The data will inform initial design and construction decisions but is also required for approvals and environmental impact assessments, for example, to identify sensitive habitats or underwater archaeological features. The geotechnical surveys will also be used to ground truth the data from the geophysical studies.
3. The activities for the geotechnical investigations will involve the following (the sample numbers are upper estimates and include all stages of testing):

- Cone penetrometer tests (CPTs) performed at up to up to 150 locations to depths of 50 to 100 metres, depending on soil conditions.
- Borehole sampling (using a drill ship or jack-up geotechnical vessel / platform) to obtain borehole samples at up to 50 locations to depths of 50 to 100 metres, depending on soil conditions.
- Vibrocoring to up to 6 metre depths, accompanied with shallow CPTs, at every 500 metres to one kilometre within the feasibility licence area and one sample every two to five kilometres of up to three selected routes within the export cable corridor area. The number of transmission cable routes surveyed for geotechnical properties will be determined from geophysical surveys and although it is likely only one route will be surveyed, it is possible that up to three routes may require geotechnical survey.
- Grab sampling, for example, using Van Veen grab samplers for roughly one sample per one to two km2 in the feasibility licence area and one sample every two to five kilometres along a selected route within the export cable corridor area.
- Piston coring, done selectively where high-quality undisturbed samples are required depending on soil conditions (e.g. in soft cohesive soils) at about 20 per cent of turbine locations and at substation locations.

In some selected boreholes and CPTs, seismic waves will be emitted to measure soil properties such as shear modulus and Poisson’s ratio at various depths (pressure meter seismic sounding log and seismic cone penetration test) investigations.

Further detail on the proposed action is described in **section 1.2 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

Based on the activities proposed and the matters of national environmental significance (MNES) in the project area (see **Attachment D: Protected Matters Search**), potential impacts to protected marine species from several taxa as well as shore bird species that were evaluated include: auditory impairment or behavioural disturbance from underwater noise during geophysical and geotechnical investigations; localised seabed disturbance and smothering from sampling and drilling; disorientation of seabirds from artificial light; and reduced air and water quality from vessel emissions and discharges. Risks include vessel interactions, equipment entanglement, accidental release of debris or pollutants, and introduction of

invasive species via biofouling or ballast water. Designed in control measures like seasonal avoidance, vessel speed restrictions and marine mammal observers to instigate the cessation of noisy activities will ensure that there will be no significant impacts to MNES.

The potential for significant impacts on and risks to MNES are considered in **section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

1.2.2 Is the project action part of a staged development or related to other actions or proposals in the region?

Yes

1.2.3 Is the proposed action the first stage of a staged development (or a larger project)?

Yes

1.2.5 Provide information about the staged development (or relevant larger project).

High Sea Wind is a proposed bottom-fixed offshore wind farm off the coast of Gippsland, Victoria. This referral is for the geophysical and geotechnical investigations, part of feasibility licence activities for the project. The construction, operation and decommissioning of High Sea Wind will be the subject of a separate EPBC Act referral relevant to a commercial licence, which is being sought for the project.

The proposed action that is the subject of this referral involves preliminary activities that support and enable the High Sea Wind project. The proposed action will provide critical data to guide design and installation decisions, including the safe positioning of infrastructure and vessels, and any necessary mitigation measures, and will necessarily be complete before any construction activities for High Sea Wind can begin. A period of at least six months is expected between the conclusion of the last survey campaign and the commencement of construction works for High Sea Wind.

1.2.6 What Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents are relevant to the proposed action, and how are they relevant? *

Under the current legislative regime, key approval processes for the proposed action will fall under both Commonwealth and Victorian state legislation. The Commonwealth legislative requirements applicable to the marine environment are detailed within **Table 2-1 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.** A summary of key legislation and policies is provided below.

Commonwealth

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act): regulates activities that may impact nationally protected species, habitats, and heritage values in Commonwealth waters.
    - EPBC Act policy:
        - EPBC Act Policy Statement 2.1 - Interaction between offshore seismic exploration and whales: Industry guidelines
        - EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance (2013)
    - EPBC Act - other provisions:
        - Section 229 - an offence is committed if the proponent causes 'death or injury of a cetacean in the Australian Whale Sanctuary', or waters beyond the outer limits of the Australian Whale Sanctuary.
        - Section 254E - it is an offence if the proponent 'trades, keeps or moves a member of a marine species', the member is a member of a listed marine species and the member has been taken in or on a Commonwealth area.
- *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* (OEI Act), OEI Regulations 2022 and OEI Amendment Regulations 2024: set out a licensing and regulatory framework for the construction, installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of offshore renewable energy and offshore electricity transmission infrastructure.
- *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* (UCH Act): aims to protect Australia's shipwrecks, sunken aircraft and other types of underwater cultural heritage including Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Underwater Cultural Heritage in Commonwealth waters.
- *Native Title Act 1993:* if native title has been determined to exist in the area of the proposed action, compliance with this Act will be required.
- *Protection of the Sea (Powers of Intervention) Act 1981*, Protection of the Sea (Powers of Intervention) Regulations 1983, *Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983* and Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) (Orders) Regulations 1994: provide rules for the management and disposal of various substances and pollutants by ships in Australian waters and regulates emergency responses to pollution events.
- *Biosecurity Act 2015*: provides direction on the management of biosecurity threats to plant, animal and human health in Australia.
- Australian biofouling management requirements – version 2 (2023): set out vessel operator obligations for the management of biofouling when operating vessels under biosecurity control within Australian territorial seas

Victoria**:**

- *Marine and Coastal Act 2018:* protects the Victorian marine and coastal environment between the outer limit of Victorian coastal waters (3 NM) and 200 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea.
- *Heritage Act 2017*: manages and protects non-Aboriginal heritage as well as underwater cultural heritage in Victorian waters.
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*: protects Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria, including in state waters.
- *Environment Protection Act 2017* and *Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018*: sets out principles of environment protection, establishes a waste management framework and environmental audit system

- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*: establishes a legal and administrative structure to enable and promote the conservation of Victoria's native flora and fauna and to provide for a choice of procedures which can be used for the conservation, management or control of flora and fauna and the management of potentially threatening processes.
- *Wildlife Act 1975*: sets the rules around how wildlife in Victoria is protected, conserved, sustainably managed and used.
- *Wildlife (Marine Mammals) Regulations 2019*: define guidelines for the protection and management of marine mammals in Victoria including minimum distance requirements (vessels, aircrafts, persons) and activity restrictions in proximity to marine mammals

Recovery plans

Marine mammals

- Conservation Management Plan for the Blue Whale - A Recovery Plan under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (DoE 2015)
- National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis* (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice *Megaptera novaeangliae* (TSSC 2015)
- Conservation Advice *Balaenoptera borealis* Sei whale (TSSC 2015)
- Conservation Advice *Balaenoptera physalus* Fin whale (TSSC 2015)

Marine turtles

- Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (DEE 2017)

Seabirds

- Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds (DAWE 2022)
- National Recovery Plan for albatrosses and petrels (DCCEEW 2022)
- National Recovery Plan for the Australian Fairy Tern (*Sternula nereis nereis*) (DAWE 2022)
- Conservation Advice for *Ardenna grisea* (sooty shearwater) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice *Pachyptila tutur subantarctica* Fairy prion (southern) (TSSC 2015)
- Conservation Advice *Halobaena caerulea* Blue petrel (TSSC 2015)
- Conservation Advice *Pterodroma mollis* Soft-plumaged petrel (TSSC 2015)
- Approved Conservation Advice for *Sternula nereis nereis* (Fairy tern) (TSSC 2011)

Shorebirds

- Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (DoE 2015a)
- National Recovery Plan for the Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice for *Calidris acuminata* (sharp-tailed sandpiper) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Calidris canutus* (red knot) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Calidris tenuirostris* (great knot) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Charadrius leschenaulti* (greater sand plover) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice for *Gallinago hardwickii* (Latham’s snipe) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Pluvialis squatarola* (grey plover) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Sternula albifrons* (little tern) (DCCEEW 2025)
- Conservation Advice for *Xenus cinereus* (terek sandpiper) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Tringa nebularia* (common greenshank) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Limosa limosa* (black-tailed godwit) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice for *Limosa lapponica baueri* (bar-tailed godwit) (DCCEEW 2024)
- Conservation Advice *Calidris ferruginea* (curlew sandpiper) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice for *Numenius madagascariensis* (far eastern curlew) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice *Thirnornis rubricollis rubricollis* Hooded plover (eastern) (TSSC 2014)
- Conservation Advice *Charadrius mongolus* Lesser sand plover (TSSC 2016)

Terrestrial migrant birds

- Conservation Advice *Grantiella picta* painted honeyeater (DoE 2015)
- Conservation Advice for *Stagonopleura guttata* (diamond firetail) (DCCEEW 2023)

Fish

- Conservation Advice for *Galaxiella pusilla* (dwarf galaxias) (DCCEEW 2023)
- Conservation Advice *Prototroctes maraena* Australian grayling (TSSC 2021)

Sharks

- Recovery Plan for the White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) (DSEWPC 2014)
- Recovery Plan for the Grey Nurse Shark (*Carcharias taurus*) (DoE 2013)
- Conservation Advice *Rhincodon typus* Whale shark (TSSC 2015)

1.2.7 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken regarding the project area, including with Indigenous stakeholders. Attach any completed consultation documentations, if relevant. *

The project is seeking approval for the proposed action during an ‘early engagement phase’ of the High Sea Wind project. Engagement during this phase (the first phase of three) is focused on building relationships with stakeholders and establishing engagement processes and protocols. High Sea Wind’s approach to engagement is guided by Ocean Wind’s internal Stakeholder Engagement Operational Plan. This strategy document defines the overarching engagement approach for the project and includes high-level processes that will support delivery of a consistent engagement approach across different project phases. This includes conducting the engagement and consultation required to obtain approval of early investigation and survey activities, as required under the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2022 (OEI Act) and OEI Regulations.

The best practice engagement guidelines for renewable energy developers have shaped the development of the High Sea Wind engagement approach and consultation methodology to achieve Ocean Wind’s commitment to delivering industry best-practice engagement. These guidelines include:

- The Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing Guide issued by the Clean Energy Council (CEC)
- Leading Practice Principles: First Nations and Renewable Energy Projects for Traditional Owner engagement issued by the Victorian Government in collaboration with CEC and KPMG
- The Better Practice Guides for landholder and community consultation and social licence issued by the Energy Charter.

The guidelines all identify similar themes, which the project will continue to incorporate in its engagement approach:

- Producing clear, accurate and timely communication
- Involving communities and stakeholders in decision making, identifying community benefits collaboratively and creating partnerships with stakeholders and communities
- Creating accessible grievance mechanisms and responding in a timely way
- Evaluating and measuring engagement and outcomes.

Stakeholder identification approach:

1. Stakeholders identified by legislation
2. Geographic extent
3. Constraints analysis
4. Other sources, including information online and feedback from stakeholders.

List of relevant stakeholders will continue to be refined as the High Sea Wind project progresses and maintain channels through which stakeholders can opt in to receive relevant information about the project via email.

Engagement on the project commenced in late 2024 with the following stakeholders:

- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Council (GLaWAC)
- Commercial fisheries
- Recreational fishing organisations
- Commonwealth government departments and agencies
- Victorian government departments and agencies
- Industry representative groups
- Universities and research centres
- Equipment and technology suppliers
- Other offshore wind developers, including the OG12
- Local communities
- Non-government organisations.

Future engagement will be tailored to stakeholder based on their level of interest in the project and the potential impacts to their operations or functions.

1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

Privacy Notice:

Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

By completing and submitting this form, you consent to the collection of all personal information contained in this form. If you are providing the personal information of other individuals in this form, please ensure you have their consent before doing so.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) collects your personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act 1988) through this platform for the purposes of enabling the department to consider your submission and contact you in relation to your submission. If you fail to provide some or all of the personal information requested on this platform (name and email address), the department will be unable to contact you to seek further information (if required) and subsequently may impact the consideration given to your submission.

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1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? *

Yes

Referring party organisation details

ABN/ACN	97117883173
Organisation name	RPS AAP CONSULTING PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 8, 31 Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Referring party details

Name	Lizy Gardner
Job title	
Phone	
Email	lizy.gardner@rpsconsulting.com
Address	

1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

1.3.2.1 Are the Person proposing to take the action details the same as the Referring party details? *

No

1.3.2.2 Is Person proposing to take the action an organisation or business? *

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	55666331960
Organisation name	HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Rafael Munilla
Job title	Chief Business Development Officer
Phone	+34 610500848
Email	rafael.munilla@oceanwinds.com
Address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

1.3.2.14 Are you proposing the action as part of a Joint Venture? *

No

1.3.2.15 Are you proposing the action as part of a Trust? *

No

1.3.2.17 Describe the Person proposing the action's history of responsible environmental management including details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against the Person proposing to take the action. *

High Sea Wind Pty Ltd, and its parent company Ocean Winds have a record of responsible environment management. Ocean Winds' commitment to responsible offshore wind development is aligned with its broader Health, Safety, Security, Environment, and Quality (HSSEQ) policy (see **Attachment E: Ocean Winds HSSEQ Policy**), ensuring that environmental considerations are central to its business operations and project execution. The company's approach to offshore wind emphasises responsible development that carefully avoids, minimises, and mitigates risks to the environment and marine biodiversity. This includes:

- Conducting thorough environmental impact assessments as part of project planning and approval processes.
- Engaging in collaborative planning with various stakeholders, including ocean users, local communities, and Indigenous peoples.
- Securing necessary environmental approvals and ensuring compliance with environmental protection laws and standards.
- Integrating environmental protection measures into all stages of offshore wind farm development, from site selection to construction, operation, and maintenance.

Ocean Winds has secured positive environmental decisions for other projects in different jurisdictions, indicating compliance with environmental impact assessment processes and adherence to environmental regulations and standards.

High Sea Wind is part of Australia's first offshore wind zone and marks a significant step in the country's energy transition. The project aligns with Victoria's target of reaching 95% renewable energy by 2035 and is designed with sustainability and environmental protection as core principles. Ocean Winds will undertake comprehensive impact assessments for High Sea Wind for marine ecosystems, avian species, and local fauna communities to ensure minimal disruption to biodiversity and habitats, thereby demonstrating a science-driven approach to environmental stewardship.

Ocean Winds has entered a collaboration with Monash University to advance offshore wind and environmental preservation in Australia. This partnership focuses on improving environmental assessment methodologies, monitoring pathways, and predictive tools to optimise outcomes for both energy transition and wildlife conservation. It highlights Ocean Winds' commitment to integrating environmental science and stakeholder engagement in their projects in Australia.

1.3.2.18 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

Ocean Winds' Health, Safety, Security, Environment, and Quality (HSSEQ) Policy (see **Attachment E: Ocean Winds HSSEQ Policy**) outlines its commitment to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements, promote a culture of safety, and integrate the protection of people, assets, and the environment in all their activities. This policy provides a framework for setting objectives that satisfy stakeholder needs and expectations, ensuring high standards of environmental management.

Key points of Ocean Wind's HSSEQ policy for environmental management include:

- A commitment to comply with all relevant regulatory and legislative environmental requirements.
- Promoting a culture of safety and environmental responsibility throughout the organisation.
- Integrating protection of people, assets, and the environment into all company activities.
- Setting clear objectives to meet stakeholder needs and expectations related to environmental protection.
- Ensuring continuous improvement in environmental performance and risk management.

The HSSEQ policy forms part of a broader a HSSEQ Management System based on the requirements of the ISO 45001, ISO 14001 and ISO 9001 standards. It applies to all Ocean Winds staff and business units, suppliers, subcontractors, sponsors, partners and collaborators. Other documents that sit underneath this policy, and will be applicable to the proposed action, include:

- Management of Change
- HSEQ Requirements for Vendors
- Non- conformity, Observation, Corrective and Improvement Report.

A key focus of all HSSEQ documentation is ensuring all staff, suppliers and subcontractors are aware of their obligations to minimise harm to the environment and promote environmental protection.

1.3.3 Identity: Proposed designated proponent

1.3.3.1 Are the Proposed designated proponent details the same as the Person proposing to take the action? *

Yes

Proposed designated proponent organisation details

ABN/ACN	55666331960
Organisation name	HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

Proposed designated proponent details

Name	Rafael Munilla
Job title	Chief Business Development Officer
Phone	+34 610500848
Email	rafael.munilla@oceanwinds.com
Address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

Confirmed Referring party's identity

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	97117883173
Organisation name	RPS AAP CONSULTING PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 8, 31 Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
Representative's name	Lizy Gardner
Representative's job title	
Phone	
Email	lizy.gardner@rpsconsulting.com
Address	

Confirmed Person proposing to take the action's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	55666331960
Organisation name	HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne
Representative's name	Rafael Munilla
Representative's job title	Chief Business Development Officer
Phone	+34 610500848
Email	rafael.munilla@oceanwinds.com
Address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

1.4.1 Do you qualify for an exemption from fees under EPBC Regulation 5.23 (1) (a)? *

No

1.4.3 Have you applied for or been granted a waiver for full or partial fees under Regulation 5.21A? *

No

1.4.5 Are you going to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under EPBC Regulation 5.21A?

No

1.4.7 Has the department issued you with a credit note? *

No

1.4.9 Would you like to add a purchase order number to your invoice? *

No

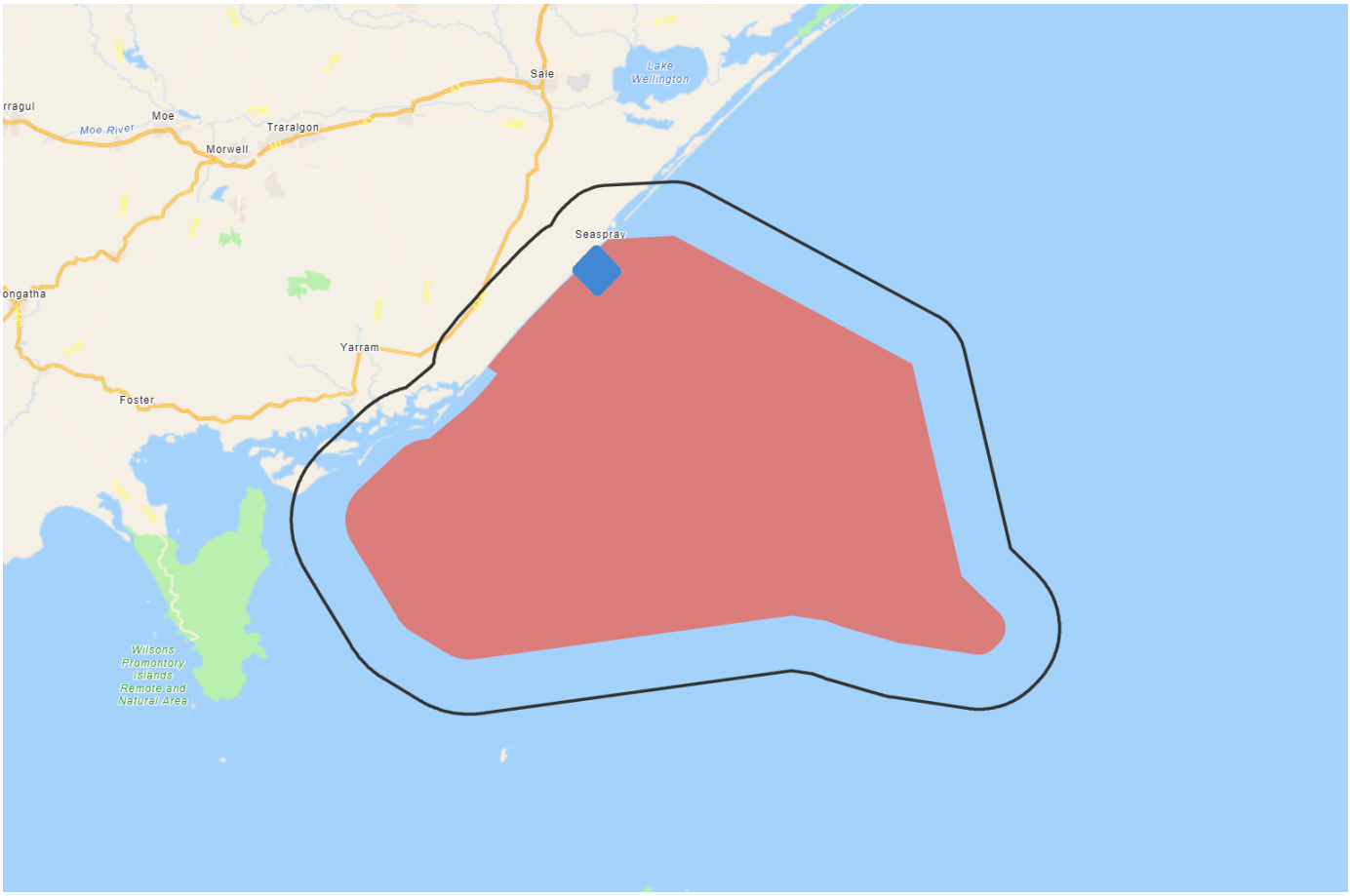
1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

1.4.11 Who would you like to allocate as the entity responsible for payment? *

Person proposing to take the action

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint



Project Area: 980877.67 Ha **Disturbance Footprint:** 617342.72 Ha **Avoidance Area:** 5024.15 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

Offshore of the coast of Gippsland, Victoria in Commonwealth and Victorian waters

2.2.2 Where is the primary jurisdiction of the proposed action? *

Commonwealth Marine

2.2.3 Is there a secondary jurisdiction for this proposed action? *

Yes

2.2.4 Where is the secondary jurisdiction of the proposed action? *

Victoria

2.2.5 What is the tenure of the action area relevant to the project area? *

The activity area is located across both Commonwealth (approximately 584,040 ha (5,840.4 km2) and Victorian state waters (approximately 37,681 ha (376.81 km2). The ownership and management of the seabed depend on the location relative to the coastline.

State waters

The seabed and subsoil within coastal waters, generally extending up to 3 nautical miles (about 5.5 kilometres) from the coastline, is owned and managed by the Victorian state government. Victoria has jurisdiction over activities within this coastal marine area. Beyond this limit, management and ownership typically pass to the Australian Commonwealth government. An Offshore Wind Energy Venture Feasibility Licence and/or consent under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (Vic) is required to conduct certain feasibility licence activities in state waters.

Commonwealth waters

Beyond the 3 nautical mile limit and up to 200 nautical miles (the Exclusive Economic Zone), the seabed is managed by the Australian Commonwealth government. The Commonwealth manages offshore resources under national legislation and oversees environmental protection and marine parks in these waters.

The tenure arrangements for offshore wind in the marine area off Gippsland are by a structured licencing process under Commonwealth jurisdiction. A feasibility licence (FL-002) (within Declared Area OEI-01-2022) was granted by the Australian Government to High Sea Wind on 1 May 2024. This feasibility licence allows seven years to undertake project development activities, including detailed environmental assessments and engineering studies before applying for a construction and operation licence.

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area’s environment.

The activity area is located off the coast of Gippsland, Victoria between Reeves Beach and Seaspray. It extends approximately 86 kilometres from the shoreline at its furthest point; and therefore, spans Victorian marine waters and Commonwealth waters. The marine area off Gippsland is in a stage of active assessment and preparation for renewable energy infrastructure and currently being assessed as part of ongoing baseline and environmental surveys. Project developers involved in the feasibility studies and project planning for offshore wind projects have indicated ongoing survey programs but have not yet released their environmental survey reports publicly. As detailed survey reports are not yet available, the environmental condition of the offshore Gippsland Basin and Commonwealth Marine Area off Gippsland can be informed by:

- Relevant CSIRO reports that provide environmental audits and ecological character descriptions from multiple field surveys and resource extraction activities.
- CSIRO publications from historical seismic surveys and resource extraction activities that discuss environmental impacts related to offshore oil and gas production.
- CSIRO reports that provide information on sediment dynamics, benthic habitats, seabed processes and marine ecosystem health to support geological storage projects.
- Baseline marine surveys described in Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and Environmental Effects Statements (EES) prepared for offshore development projects, such as Gippsland Ports.
- Seafloor mapping and marine life sampling undertaken and reported by research programs, such as the National Environmental Science Program.
- Reports and management plans from Commonwealth and State government agencies
- Published literature in scientific journals and citations within the marine ecology report
- Data from the Victorian Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and related organisations that describe the water quality status of the Gippsland Basin.

Overall, a desktop review of available sources portrays the offshore Gippsland Basin as an environmentally valuable area facing pressures from human activities but maintaining important natural processes and habitats. The offshore Gippsland Basin features a dynamic and complex marine environment with diverse benthic habitats and active sediment processes that support a rich and varied ecosystem. The matters protected under the EPBC Act that may be present within the project area are described in **section 5 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

While the area maintains significant ecological integrity, it has experienced environmental pressures from historical oil and gas exploration and production which have impacted seabed habitats and marine life by causing physical disturbance to seabed habitats through drilling and infrastructure installation, the introduction of pollutants into the marine environment, and the generation of underwater noise from production platforms and vessels. While some infrastructure has created artificial reefs supporting certain species, overall, these activities have led to habitat degradation and changes in biodiversity. Ongoing baseline surveys reveal natural variability in physical conditions such as currents and sediment transport, essential for sustaining habitat diversity and ecosystem health. The marine ecosystem remains resilient, with key habitats and species continuing to thrive.

The Victorian EPA monitoring data indicate that the offshore marine environment in the Gippsland Basin maintains moderate to good water quality, with variations influenced by natural oceanographic processes and seasonal factors. While nutrient levels occasionally rise, potentially contributing to localised eutrophication risk, overall, the offshore waters remain supportive of marine biodiversity and ecosystem health.

The Southeast Bioregional Plan is a marine management framework developed by the Australian Government to guide sustainable use and conservation of marine and coastal environments in the southeast marine region of Australia. The plan highlights the basin’s significance for benthic communities, fish habitats, and migratory species. The plan identifies several threats to the Gippsland Basin environment, including:

- Impacts from historical and ongoing oil and gas exploration and production, such as habitat disturbance, pollution, and infrastructure presence.
- Risks from invasive species and changes to native biodiversity.
- Climate change effects, including ocean warming and acidification, which may alter species distributions and ecosystem dynamics.
- Potential impacts from fishing activities and marine debris.
- Cumulative impacts from multiple human activities increasing pressure on the marine ecosystem.

3.1.2 Describe any existing or proposed uses for the project area.

The offshore Gippsland marine area is currently used and proposed for a range of uses, including:

- Hydrocarbon exploration and production
- Defence
- Shipping, and maritime transport, including port facilities servicing Gippsland
- Fishing industries and recreational fishing activities
- Renewable energy generation.

Current uses

Hydrocarbon exploration and production

The Gippsland Basin is a significant hydrocarbon province with ongoing offshore oil and gas extraction activities supporting energy supply and regional industry. The region is considered mature (with production from some wells declining) and hydrocarbon production infrastructure is well developed. This includes a network of pipelines transporting gas to onshore processing facilities at Longford and Orbost. Multiple operators are engaged in ongoing development. Decommissioning plans for oil and gas infrastructure in the Gippsland Basin are also underway, particularly led by Esso Australia (a major operator in the region) and ExxonMobil which will involve activities to dismantle and remove offshore platforms.

Defence

The region is used by the Australian Defence Force for maritime operations, including naval exercises and training.

Shipping and ports

Gippsland features important commercial shipping routes that facilitate the transport of goods, including oil and gas products, fishing catches, and general cargo. The established port and shipping infrastructure is critical for offshore hydrocarbon operations, including the transport of equipment and personnel. The Gippsland region's ports also support marine industries, including vessel maintenance and servicing, contributing to local employment and economic development.

Fishing

There are a number of commercial fisheries that operate across the project are. These fisheries hold licences either under Commonwealth or Victorian jurisdiction. The Gippsland Lakes and surrounding area is also a popular region for recreational fishing. As part of the management plan that High Sea Wind will need to develop for the proposed action under the OEI Act, these commercial fisheries and recreational fishing organisations will be consulted to understand how fishing and offshore wind can coexist.

Proposed Uses

Renewable energy generation

The area has been declared by the Commonwealth Government as a priority zone for offshore wind energy development. Multiple offshore wind projects are in planning or feasibility stages within the zone which may result in large-scale wind farms with turbines, cabling, and offshore substations primarily located in Commonwealth waters. Environmental surveys and monitoring for these projects have commenced or are planned to assess the potential impacts of these projects.

3.1.3 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values that applies to the project area.

MNES or other matters protected under the EPBC Act that may be present within the project area are described in **section 5: of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report** (see also, **Attachment D: Protected Matters Search**).

The Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) identified the presence of:

- Two wetlands of international importance (Ramsar) sites. No geophysical or geotechnical surveys will occur within either Ramsar site, but there are small areas, as indicated in the brackets below, of overlap with the potential disturbance footprint.
    1. Gippsland Lake Ramsar Site (approximately 15 km2)
    2. Corner Inlet Ramsar Site (approximately 182 km2)
- The Commonwealth Marine Area that comprises the waters, seabed and airspace within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone and over the continental shelf of Australia. An assessment of the potential impacts to the Commonwealth Marine Area caused by the proposed activities, against the significant impact criteria, has been completed in section 7 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.
- Two listed Threatened Ecological Communities (both are present only onshore, where there will not be any activities but within the ten kilometre buffer around the project area):
    1. Natural damp grassland of the Victorian coastal plains
    2. Subtropical and temperate coastal saltmarsh
- 97 listed threatened species and 72 listed migratory species: the EPBC Act listed threatened and migratory species and their likelihood of occurrence are set out in **Table 5-3 in Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**.

The Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park (which is managed under state legislation) lies within the activity area, within Victorian waters. No surveys will occur within the Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park or a one kilometre buffer outside it. This area comprises part of the avoidance footprint for the proposed action.

Other matters protected by the EPBC Act within the project area include:

- 97 threatened species
- 72 migratory species
- 114 listed marine species
- 15 whales and other cetaceans
- The Beagle Marine Park, a declared area within the Commonwealth Marine Area designated to protect and maintain biodiversity and ecological processes, overlaps with the potential disturbance footprint (~149 km2 overlap, 1.52 %)
- 14 biologically important areas (BIAs). BIAs are areas utilised by EPBC Act protected marine species for carrying out critical life functions including reproduction, feeding, migrating or resting. There are 14 BIAs that overlap the activity area. The list below details these BIAs and the percentage overlap between the activity area and the BIA.
    1. Pygmy blue whale – Foraging (0.55%)
    2. Southern right whale - Reproduction (approximately April to September) (0.24%)
    3. Southern right whale - Migration (approximately May to October) (0.25%)
    4. White shark - Breeding (nursery area) (19.89 %)
    5. White shark – Foraging (in buffer area only)
    6. Campbell albatross – Foraging (0.12%)
    7. Black-browed albatross – Foraging (0.12%)
    8. Indian yellow-nosed albatross – Foraging (0.18%)
    9. Shy albatross – Foraging likely (0.07%)
    10. Bullers albatross – Foraging (0.28%)
    11. Common diving-petrel – Foraging (0.23%)
    12. White-faced storm petrel – Foraging (1.18%)

13. Wandering albatross – Foraging (0.16 %)
14. Short-tailed shearwater – Foraging (0.42%)

Four shipwrecks protected under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* were identified as occurring within the activity area:

- the *SS Glenelg* – a twin screw steamer, wrecked in 1900, possesses a 500 m radius protection zone around the wreck (DCCEEW, 2023)
- *Magnolia* – a schooner, wrecked in 1887
- *Sarah* – a schooner, wrecked in 1838
- the *City of Hobart* – an iron screw steamer, wrecked in 1877.

A further 23 shipwrecks were identified as occurring within the broader disturbance area.

3.1.4 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area.

The depth gradient within the activity area transitions from shallow nearshore waters (zero metres at the shoreline) to deeper offshore waters (a maximum 74.75 metres at the southern-most end of the activity area) with a generally parallel alignment of depth contours. The export cable landfall for High Sea Wind is expected to be in waters deeper than five metres. For the purpose of the impact assessment (reported in **section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**), however, it has been assumed that surveys could be undertaken in water depths that range from a minimum of five metres (for the nearshore works) to 75 metres at the southern part of the activity area.

The nearshore and offshore activities are differentiated by water depth as follows:

- Nearshore activities to occur at depths up to 20 metres LAT
- Offshore activities to occur at depths deeper than 10 metres LAT.

Between the 10 metres LAT to 20 metres LAT depth contour both nearshore and offshore activities may be undertaken. The activities to be undertaken for nearshore and offshore surveys are defined in **section 3.3 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**.

3.2 Flora and fauna

3.2.1 Describe the flora and fauna within the affected area and attach any investigations of surveys if applicable.

Ecosystem

The activity area features a temperate marine ecosystem characterised by a mix of soft sediment seabeds and scattered rocky reef habitats. Key ecosystem components include seafloor habitats (such as sands and gravels), benthic communities and marine flora and fauna. These ecological communities collectively support a diverse marine ecosystem that underpins regional biodiversity.

Fauna

The PMST documented 97 EPBC Act listed threatened species that may occur within the project area. These include four marine mammals, 45 seabirds, shorebirds or marine Bass Strait migrants, three marine turtles, three fish and three shark. Seventy-two of the species identified within the PMST, with potential to occur within the survey area, are classified as migratory species under the EPBC Act. These include nine marine mammals, 54 seabirds, shorebirds or marine Bass Strait migrants, three marine turtles and six sharks. The EPBC Act listed threatened and migratory species identified are summarised in **Table 5-3 in Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report** and discussed in detail in section 5 of that report.

Ecological Communities

There are two listed Threatened Ecological Communities present only within the disturbance footprint of the project area: natural damp grassland of the Victorian coastal plains and subtropical and temperate coastal saltmarsh. As the proposed action will be marine-based, with no works taking place outside of the activity area, no impacts are expected on these Threatened Ecological Communities. Further information is included in **section 5.5 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**.

Flora

Detailed benthic and marine flora surveys will be undertaken, likely in 2026, to establish baseline habitats. In the interim, desktop studies describe marine flora distribution offshore in the project area, which lies entirely on the Bass Strait shelf, as characterised mostly by soft sediments like gravels and sands, with fine shelly sands near southeastern Victoria. Low-relief rocky calcarenite reefs supporting encrusting sponges, ascidians, bryozoans, hydroids, soft corals, and red algae occur sparsely behind the surf zone (seven to 25 metres deep) off Ninety Mile Beach. Nearby gravelly sites show epifauna dominated by bryozoans, with fewer bivalves and gastropods, while sandy areas have fewer fauna but more bioclasts. Seabed habitats are described further in **section 5.9 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**.

BIAs

BIAs are areas utilised by EPBC Act protected marine species for carrying out critical life functions including reproduction, feeding, migrating or resting. There are 14 BIAs that overlap the activity area. The percentage of overlap between the activity area and the BIAs are indicated in brackets below.

1. Pygmy blue whale – Foraging (0.55%)
2. Southern right whale - Reproduction (approximately April to September) (0.24%)
3. Southern right whale - Migration (approximately May to October) (0.25%)
4. White shark - Breeding (nursery area) (19.89 %)
5. White shark – Foraging (in buffer area only)
6. Campbell albatross – Foraging (0.12%)
7. Black-browed albatross – Foraging (0.12%)
8. Indian yellow-nosed albatross – Foraging (0.18%)
9. Shy albatross – Foraging likely (0.07%)
10. Bullers albatross – Foraging (0.28%)
11. Common diving-petrel – Foraging (0.23%)
12. White-faced storm petrel – Foraging (1.18%)
13. Wandering albatross – Foraging (0.16 %)

14. Short-tailed shearwater – Foraging (0.42%)

3.2.2 Describe the vegetation (including the status of native vegetation and soil) within the project area.

There is no vegetation within the investigation area given the area is entirely within the marine environment. Marine flora is described in **Section 5.8 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.**

3.3 Heritage

3.3.1 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

No known World Heritage Properties, National Heritage Places or Commonwealth Heritage Places were identified through the PMST search as being within the project area (see **Attachment D: Protected Matters Search**).

Four shipwrecks were identified as occurring within the activity area. The four known wreck sites, the *SS Glenelg* (with a 500 metre protection zone radius), the *Sarah*, the *Magnolia* and *City of Hobart*, will be avoided by geotechnical sampling points. Likewise, should an additional wreck or potential wreck be identified, geotechnical sampling points will avoid this area.

The methods used for geophysical investigations are non-intrusive and no contact with made with the seabed, and therefore there is no risk of impacts to underwater cultural heritage. Geotechnical studies do involve sampling and drilling of the seabed and therefore present a risk of disturbance of underwater cultural heritage. To prevent this disturbance analysis of the geophysical investigation data will be undertaken by an underwater archaeologist to identify unknown underwater cultural heritage sites, the location of which will feed into the planned locations for the geotechnical sampling point. Should potential underwater cultural heritage be identified, geotechnical sampling points will avoid this area.

3.3.2 Describe any Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area.

No records of First Nations underwater cultural heritage items were identified within the Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database as occurring within the activity area. However, First Nations underwater cultural heritage values, such as milaythina muka (Sea Country), exists throughout the south-east marine region, described within Sea Country – an Indigenous perspective, The South-east Regional Marine Plan Assessment Reports (Smyth, 2002). The Tayaritja Islands (Bass strait Islands) and the coastal area between Nanjit and Mallacoota are important Sea Country within the region and considered Sea Country Indigenous Protection Areas (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, 2025; GLaWAC, 2025).

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for the project area. It is likely that areas of cultural heritage sensitivity exist within the area, in particular along the coast. High Sea Wind will develop the project in partnership with GLaWAC including investigating sea country and cultural values of the project area as part of ongoing project development.

The Beagle Australian marine park holds cultural significance to a number of Aboriginal communities as up until approximately 10,000 years ago the area in which the park sits was once dry land which made up part of the land bridge between Victoria and Tasmania and was lived and travelled upon by First Nations people.

3.4 Hydrology

3.4.1 Describe the hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area and attach any hydrological investigations or surveys if applicable. *

The activity area is separate from and does not affect any onshore hydrological features.

4. Impacts and mitigation

4.1 Impact details

Potential Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) relevant to your proposed action area.

EPBC Act section	Controlling provision	Impacted	Reviewed
S12	World Heritage	No	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	No	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	Yes	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	No	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	No	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	Yes	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	No	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

4.1.1 World Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.1.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.1.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposed project area does not intersect with any World Heritage sites. With no effect pathway to these sites, the proposed action will not cause any direct or indirect impacts.

4.1.2 National Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.2.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The project area does not intersect with any National Heritage. With no effect pathway to these sites, the proposed action will not cause any direct or indirect impacts.

4.1.3 Ramsar Wetland

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ramsar wetland
No	Yes	Corner Inlet
No	Yes	Gippsland Lakes

4.1.3.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.3.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Two Ramsar wetlands - the Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites - partially overlap with the 10 kilometre buffer around the proposed action activity area, which comprises the potential disturbance footprint. The overlaps with the disturbance footprint are minimal, covering approximately 182.32 km² of Corner Inlet and 14.76 km² of Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites, respectively. No direct impacts as a result of the proposed action are anticipated, however there may be some indirect impacts as described below.

While no surveys will take place outside the activity area and within either Ramsar site, vessel operations may occasionally bring lights within 20 kilometres of these wetlands and produce low-level noise from dynamic positioning within the footprint. These intermittent, localised effects are not predicted to alter the lifecycle of the native waterbirds and shorebirds, or the abundance of their prey.

Possible effects to water quality as a result of routine vessel discharge would be localised to the vessel, which would be at a minimum three nautical miles from land, and the discharge would mix rapidly into the immediate waters. Therefore, any reductions in water quality as a result of geotechnical activities are expected to be highly localised and short-term, with no expected impacts extending to the Corner Inlet or Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites.

Vessels utilised during the proposed action will:

- Abide by the ballast water exchange guidelines defined by DAWE in the Australian Ballast Water Management requirements (DAWE, 2020), with no discharge of ballast water within 12 nautical miles of land.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Australian biofouling management requirements (DAFF, 2023) regarding the management of biofouling risks.

Therefore, the introduction and establishment of invasive marine species through biofouling or ballast water discharge that results in impacts to the Corner Inlet or Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites is extremely unlikely.

A full assessment of the impacts and risks to both sites, against the relevant significant impact criteria is provided in **Table 8-1 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**.

4.1.3.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.3.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

The Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites overlap only with the 10 kilometre disturbance footprint buffer surrounding the activity area.

A review of impacts and risks against the *Matters of National Environmental Significance – Significant impact guidelines 1.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (DoE, 2013) is included in **section 8 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment**, with further details in section 6 of that document. Under the significant impact criteria guidelines, a significant impact is defined as having consequence with regard to the intensity of the impact, which depends on the sensitivity, value and quality of the receptor and the intensity, duration, extent and magnitude of the impact. It is not expected that there will be any significant impacts to MNES, including wetlands of international importance.

As no geophysical or geotechnical works will take place within these sites, there is no pathway for permanent impacts to occur to the wetland areas and the proposed activities will not result in areas of the wetland being destroyed or substantially modified. The proposed surveys are not expected to have any impact on hydrological regimes.

Any seabed disturbance that may indirectly cause impacts to invertebrates or fish as a result of geotechnical activities are expected to be localised to less than 100 metres from the sampling site and short-term, with no expected impacts extending to the Corner Inlet or Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites. Vessel operations may occasionally bring lights within 20 kilometres of these wetlands and produce low-level continuous noise from dynamic positioning within the footprint. These intermittent, localised effects are not predicted to alter the lifecycle of the native waterbirds and shorebirds, or the abundance of their prey.

Possible effects to water quality would be localised to the vessel (discharge point; ballast water > 12 nautical miles and routine dischargers > three nautical miles from land) and the discharge would mix rapidly into the immediate waters. Therefore, any reductions in water quality as a result of geotechnical activities are expected to be highly localised and short-term, with no expected impacts extending to the Corner Inlet or Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites.

Vessels utilised during the proposed activities will:

- Abide by the ballast water exchange guidelines defined by DAWE in the Australian Ballast Water Management requirements (DAWE, 2020), with no discharge of ballast water within 12 nautical miles of land.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Australian biofouling management requirements (DAFF, 2023) regarding the management of biofouling risks.

Therefore, the introduction and establishment of invasive marine species through biofouling or ballast water discharge that results in impacts to the Corner Inlet or Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites is extremely unlikely.

Based on the above, no significant impacts to Ramsar wetlands are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

4.1.3.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.3.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment reviews the potential impacts, risks and control measures for the proposed action and finds there are no significant impacts to MNES expected as a result of the geophysical and geotechnical surveys. Therefore, the proposed action is not a controlled action.

Mitigation and control measures that will be implemented to avoid or manage impacts are described in **Section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment.**

4.1.3.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

As discussed in 4.1.3.6, The Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes Ramsar sites overlap only with the 10 kilometre disturbance footprint buffer surrounding the activity area. As such, no geophysical or geotechnical works will take place within these sites. A suite of control measures has been defined in **section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment** to mitigate potential impacts and risks of the proposed action. These will further reduce any impacts to Ramsar wetlands and include:

Seabed disturbance

- Dynamic positioning will be used by vessels with minimal routine anchoring to be implemented
- Controlled deployment and recovery of survey equipment to minimise impact on seabed contact
- No geophysical or geotechnical activities will occur outside of the activity area or within the Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park
- Micro-siting and avoidance of reefs and hard substrata during geotechnical studies where possible.

Drilling waste discharge

- Drilling fluid/mud used during the drilling will be a non-toxic, biodegradable fluid/mud mixed with seawater, with only 'Gold'/'Silver' (CHARM) or 'D'/'E' (non-CHARM) OCNS-rated additive considered. No synthetic fluids or muds will be used.
- No geophysical or geotechnical activities will occur outside of the activity area or within the Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park

Artificial light emissions

- Survey vessel lighting will be limited to the minimum required for navigational and safety requirements except for emergency events with external vessel lighting managed in accordance with AMSA Marine Orders Part 30 (Prevention of collisions) and Part 59 (offshore support vessel operations). Any non-essential lighting will be turned off wherever possible
- Implementation of recommendations outline in the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (DCCEEW, 2023a).

Atmospheric emissions

- Compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements for marine air pollution and air emissions outlined in Marine Order 97 – Marine pollution prevention – air pollution (AMSA, 2023), aligning with the International Maritimes Organisation's MARPOL Annex VI.

Routine vessel discharges

- Marine discharges from vessels will be managed in accordance with regulatory requirements including;

– Drainage and discharges from vessel deck overboard in accordance with MARPOL 73/78 Annex I (oil)

– Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) in accordance with MARPOL 73/78 Annex IV (sewage)

- Vessel food scraps and other general wastes in accordance with MARPOL 73/78 Annex V (garbage) and AMSA Marine Order 95: Marine Pollution Prevention – garbage. There will be no vessel refuelling at sea.

Accidental discharges or releases

- Marine discharges will be managed in accordance with regulatory requirements
- Compliance with Commonwealth legislation giving effect to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), including Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, the Navigation Act 2012 and Marine Orders 91 and 93 through to 97.

Invasive marine species

- Management of vessel biofouling and ballast water in accordance with the Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements and the Australian Biofouling Management Requirements as applicable to ensure no invasive marine species are introduces or spread to areas where they were not previously present.
- Anti-fouling systems in place will be in accordance with AMSA Marine Order Part 98 (anti-fouling systems) requirements
- Equipment will be inspected and cleaned to remove biofouling where required between sampling areas.

4.1.3.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

As the proposed action is not considered a controlled action, an offset plan is not required.

4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Amphibromus fluitans	River Swamp Wallaby-grass, Floating Swamp Wallaby-grass
No	No	Antechinus minimus maritimus	Swamp Antechinus (mainland)
No	No	Anthochaera phrygia	Regent Honeyeater
No	No	Ardenna grisea	Sooty Shearwater
No	No	Arenaria interpres	Ruddy Turnstone
No	No	Balaenoptera borealis	Sei Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera musculus	Blue Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera physalus	Fin Whale
No	No	Botaurus poiciloptilus	Australasian Bittern
No	No	Caladenia orientalis	Eastern Spider Orchid
No	No	Caladenia tessellata	Thick-lipped Spider-orchid, Daddy Long-legs
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris canutus	Red Knot, Knot
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris tenuirostris	Great Knot
No	No	Callocephalon fimbriatum	Gang-gang Cockatoo
No	No	Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami	South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo
No	No	Carcharodon carcharias	White Shark, Great White Shark
No	No	Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Turtle
No	No	Centrophorus harrissoni	Harrisson's Dogfish, Endeavour Dogfish, Dumb Gulper Shark, Harrison's Deepsea Dogfish

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Centrophorus uyato	Little Gulper Shark
No	No	Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover
No	No	Charadrius mongolus	Lesser Sand Plover, Mongolian Plover
No	No	Chelonia mydas	Green Turtle
No	No	Climacteris picumnus victoriae	Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern)
No	No	Commersonia prostrata	Dwarf Kerrawang
No	No	Dasyurus maculatus maculatus (SE mainland population)	Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population)
No	No	Dermochelys coriacea	Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth
No	No	Dianella amoena	Matted Flax-lily
No	No	Diomedea antipodensis	Antipodean Albatross
No	No	Diomedea antipodensis gibsoni	Gibson's Albatross
No	No	Diomedea epomophora	Southern Royal Albatross
No	No	Diomedea exulans	Wandering Albatross
No	No	Diomedea sanfordi	Northern Royal Albatross
No	No	Dodonaea procumbens	Trailing Hop-bush
No	No	Eubalaena australis	Southern Right Whale
No	No	Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon
No	No	Fregetta grallaria grallaria	White-bellied Storm-Petrel (Tasman Sea), White-bellied Storm-Petrel (Australasian)
No	No	Galaxiella pusilla	Eastern Dwarf Galaxias, Dwarf Galaxias
No	No	Galeorhinus galeus	School Shark, Eastern School Shark, Snapper Shark, Tope, Soupfin Shark
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Glycine latrobeana	Clover Glycine, Purple Clover
No	No	Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater
No	No	Halobaena caerulea	Blue Petrel
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Hoplostethus atlanticus	Orange Roughy, Deep-sea Perch, Red Roughy
No	No	Isoodon obesulus obesulus	Southern Brown Bandicoot (eastern), Southern Brown Bandicoot (south-eastern)
No	No	Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot
No	No	Lepidium hyssopifolium	Basalt Pepper-cress, Peppercress, Rubble Pepper-cress, Pepperweed
No	No	Limosa lapponica baueri	Nunivak Bar-tailed Godwit, Western Alaskan Bar-tailed Godwit
No	No	Limosa limosa	Black-tailed Godwit
No	No	Lissolepis coventryi	Swamp Skink, Eastern Mourning Skink
No	No	Litoria aurea	Green and Golden Bell Frog
No	No	Litoria raniformis	Southern Bell Frog, Growling Grass Frog, Green and Golden Frog, Warty Swamp Frog, Golden Bell Frog
No	No	Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel
No	No	Macronectes halli	Northern Giant Petrel
No	No	Melanodryas cucullata cucullata	South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern)
No	No	Neophema chrysogaster	Orange-bellied Parrot
No	No	Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot
No	No	Numenius madagascariensis	Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew
No	No	Pachyptila turtur subantarctica	Fairy Prion (southern)
No	No	Petaurus australis australis	Yellow-bellied Glider (south-eastern)
No	No	Phoebetria fusca	Sooty Albatross
No	No	Pluvialis squatarola	Grey Plover
No	No	Potorous tridactylus trisulcatus	Long-nosed Potoroo (southern mainland)
No	No	Prasophyllum frenchii	Maroon Leek-orchid, Slaty Leek-orchid, Stout Leek-orchid, French's Leek-orchid, Swamp Leek-orchid

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Prasophyllum spicatum	Dense Leek-orchid
No	No	Prototroctes maraena	Australian Grayling
No	No	Pseudomys novaehollandiae	New Holland Mouse, Pookila
No	No	Pterodroma leucoptera leucoptera	Gould's Petrel, Australian Gould's Petrel
No	No	Pteropus poliocephalus	Grey-headed Flying-fox
No	No	Pterostylis chlorogramma	Green-striped Greenhood
No	No	Pycnoptilus floccosus	Pilotbird
No	No	Rexea solandri (eastern Australian population)	Eastern Gemfish
No	No	Rhincodon typus	Whale Shark
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
No	No	Senecio psilocarpus	Swamp Fireweed, Smooth-fruited Groundsel
No	No	Seriolella brama	Blue Warehou
No	No	Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail
No	No	Sternula albifrons	Little Tern
No	No	Sternula nereis nereis	Australian Fairy Tern
No	No	Thalassarche bulleri	Buller's Albatross, Pacific Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche bulleri platei	Northern Buller's Albatross, Pacific Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche carteri	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche cauta	Shy Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche chrysostoma	Grey-headed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche eremita	Chatham Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche impavida	Campbell Albatross, Campbell Black-browed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche melanophris	Black-browed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche salvini	Salvin's Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche steadi	White-capped Albatross

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Thelymitra epipactoides	Metallic Sun-orchid
No	No	Thelymitra matthewsii	Spiral Sun-orchid
No	No	Thesium australe	Austral Toadflax, Toadflax
No	No	Thinornis cucullatus cucullatus	Eastern Hooded Plover, Eastern Hooded Plover
No	No	Tringa nebularia	Common Greenshank, Greenshank
No	No	Uperoleia martini	Martin's Toadlet
No	No	Xenus cinereus	Terek Sandpiper
No	No	Xerochrysum palustre	Swamp Everlasting, Swamp Paper Daisy

Ecological communities

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ecological community
No	No	Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains
No	No	Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh

4.1.4.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.4.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The PMST (see **Attachment D: Protected Matters Search**) documented 97 EPBC Act listed threatened species that may occur within the project area**.** Threatened species that may occur within the marine environment include four marine mammals, three fish species, three shark species, three marine turtles and 45 seabirds, shorebirds or marine migrants. An additional 39 terrestrial species were within the proposed action area, however there are no impact pathways that could affect these species.

An assessment of potential impacts to listed threatened species has been conducted in **Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**. This assessment concludes there are no significant impacts to threatened species as per the EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance (2013), as the potential impacts are limited to the duration of the investigations, localised to within the areas of the investigations and due to the designed in mitigations of the proposed action.

Underwater noise from geophysical investigation acoustic equipment or geotechnical investigations and associated vessels can lead to potential auditory impairment in noise-sensitive marine fauna in close proximity to sound sources, or localised and temporary behavioural disturbance to noise-sensitive marine fauna. As indicated in **section 6.1 of Attachment C**, underwater sound has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna species including marine mammals and turtles.

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that during geophysical investigations, the effects of noise on marine mammals are expected to be limited to a behavioural response within hundreds of metres. At this distance, there will be no significant impact to blue whales or other marine mammals that may be foraging in or migrating through the survey area during investigations. A behavioural response may occur out to several kms during geotechnical investigations, as a result of vessels maintaining position on DP during activities. However, the proposed action has been designed to ensure that the possibility of blue whales being behaviourally disturbed so as to limit their recovery is highly unlikely. The proposed action would also occur outside of southern right whale (SRW) reproduction BIA and buffer area extending 3km from the BIA during the recognised SRW period of presence (April to October) and therefore it is unlikely that any SRWs will be encountered. However, in the event of temporal overlap, the proposed action has been designed to ensure there will be no significant impacts to SRWs that will interfere with the recovery of the population. As such, the proposed action is not inconsistent with the National Recovery Plan for the SRW (DCCEEW 2024) and the Conservation Management Plan for the blue whale (2015) and underwater noise is not expected to generate any significant impacts.

Given the small spatial scale of the noise footprint, transient nature of other marine mammal species and proposed timing of investigations, along with designed in mitigations of the proposed action consistent with EPBC Act PS 2.1, the probability of disturbing any other listed threatened cetacean species is low.

During geophysical investigations, marine turtles could experience a behavioural response if they are within 30 to 120 m of the noise source. However, given the lack of nesting areas and limited sightings of marine turtles in the Gippsland region, it is not likely that marine turtles would be significantly impacted by underwater noise during offshore investigations.

Seabed disturbance resulting from grab sampling, drilling boreholes, coring and potential anchoring has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna that are benthic foragers, including marine mammals and turtles (see **section 6.2 of Attachment C**).

Due to large foraging ranges for benthic and pelagic foraging species seabed disturbance is not expected to significantly impact foraging for these threatened marine fauna. For most marine mammal and turtle species, seabed disturbance impacts are not expected to be significant because they and their habitat are typically widespread, and the disturbance will be localised and temporary.

Drilling waste discharges associated with drilling boreholes leading to potential localised smothering has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna that are benthic foragers, including marine mammals and turtles (**see section 6.3 of Attachment C**).

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that the discharge of drilling waste is small in nature and scale, and includes use of only OCNS D and E and CHARM gold and silver rated chemicals, and so is not expected to generate any significant impacts to any listed threatened species.

Artificial light emissions from night-time operations have the potential to lead to disorientation or grounding of seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.4.1 of Attachment C**).

Unmanaged artificial lighting generated by the survey vessels could result in a behavioural response, e.g. disorientation leading to collision or grounding, displacement or navigational interference. In order to mitigate this, the proposed action has been designed to ensure any potential impacts to seabirds (in particular albatross, petrels and shearwaters) are minimised by implementing lighting management in accordance with the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (DCCEEW, 2023). Subsequently lighting impacts to seabirds are expected to be limited to individuals with no population level impacts on any EPBC Act listed seabird species. As such, no significant impacts to threatened seabird species are anticipated.

Atmospheric emissions from the investigation vessels causing temporary reductions in air quality has the potential to impact listed threatened seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.5 of Attachment C**).

Vessel emissions are expected to be dispersed rapidly by offshore winds, and seabird presence in the activity area are expected to be limited to vessel overfly. Shorebirds cannot swim and therefore, the offshore environment is not a suitable habitat for this group of birds. Given these factors, air emissions are not expected to reach high enough concentrations to have any impact on threatened seabird or shorebird species.

Routine vessel discharges and/or accidental unplanned releases of hydrocarbons or chemicals has the potential to cause a temporary reduction in water quality and therefore impact marine fauna that transit nearby through the water column, including marine mammals, turtles, sharks, seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.6 of Attachment C**).

There may be temporary changes to water quality as a result of routine discharges during planned activities, however, with the total quantities of allowable discharges set through the MARPOL Convention as outlined in section 6.6.2 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment, it is expected that these effects would be highly localised and restricted to the immediate area surrounding the discharge. Overall, any ecological effects are expected to be temporary, localised and unlikely to result in long-term harm. As such, routine discharge of vessel waste is not expected to generate any significant impacts to any listed threatened species.

Vessel collision with listed threatened species causing potential injury/death of an animal has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna, including marine mammals and turtles (see **section 6.7 of Attachment C**).

The likely sparse presence of listed threatened marine mammals and turtles, seasonal restrictions of the proposed action, potential displays of avoidance behaviour of the survey vessel and the control measures for noise that have been designed in to the proposed action mean that the probability of colliding with any cetacean or marine turtle is low. As such, the proposed action is not inconsistent with species recovery plans and vessel collision risk is not expected to generate any significant impacts.

Equipment entanglement (towed equipment) causing potential injury of an animal has the potential to impact threatened marine fauna, including marine mammals, turtles and sharks (see **section 6.8 of Attachment C**).

With activity designed to minimise the risk of escape of marine debris in the form of general vessel waste, the surveys would not contribute to the threat of marine debris entanglement impacts on these MNES species. Turtles are at particular risk from marine debris compared with other fauna, however, the presence of marine turtles in the activity area is likely to be restricted to vagrant individuals and as a result, impacts to turtles from entanglement is highly unlikely. As such, the proposed action is unlikely to significantly impact on listed threatened species.

Accidental dropped objects overboard causing potential entanglement and injury of an animal has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna, including marine mammals, turtles and sharks (see **section 6.11 of Attachment C**).

With the control measures designed into the proposed action, there is not expected to be a significant impact to any listed threatened species as a result of dropped objects.

Invasive marine species from vessel biofouling or ballast water can cause potential introduction or spread of invasive marine species into an environment they were not previously found. This has the potential to impact listed threatened marine fauna, particularly any that are associated with the seabed, including marine mammals, turtles, sharks, seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.12 of Attachment C**).

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that the control measures designed-in to the proposed action to prevent introduction of invasive species, there is not expected to generate a significant impact to any listed threatened species.

4.1.5 Migratory Species

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper
No	No	Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	Ardenna carneipes	Flesh-footed Shearwater, Fleshy-footed Shearwater
No	No	Ardenna grisea	Sooty Shearwater
No	No	Ardenna tenuirostris	Short-tailed Shearwater
No	No	Arenaria interpres	Ruddy Turnstone
No	No	Balaenoptera bonaerensis	Antarctic Minke Whale, Dark-shoulder Minke Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera borealis	Sei Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera edeni	Bryde's Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera musculus	Blue Whale
No	No	Balaenoptera physalus	Fin Whale
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris alba	Sanderling
No	No	Calidris canutus	Red Knot, Knot
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris pugnax	Ruff
No	No	Calidris ruficollis	Red-necked Stint
No	No	Calidris tenuirostris	Great Knot
No	No	Caperea marginata	Pygmy Right Whale
No	No	Carcharhinus longimanus	Oceanic Whitetip Shark
No	No	Carcharias taurus	Grey Nurse Shark

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Carcharodon carcharias	White Shark, Great White Shark
No	No	Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Turtle
No	No	Charadrius bicinctus	Double-banded Plover
No	No	Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover
No	No	Charadrius mongolus	Lesser Sand Plover, Mongolian Plover
No	No	Charadrius veredus	Oriental Plover, Oriental Dotterel
No	No	Chelonia mydas	Green Turtle
No	No	Dermochelys coriacea	Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth
No	No	Diomedea antipodensis	Antipodean Albatross
No	No	Diomedea epomophora	Southern Royal Albatross
No	No	Diomedea exulans	Wandering Albatross
No	No	Diomedea sanfordi	Northern Royal Albatross
No	No	Eubalaena australis	Southern Right Whale
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Gallinago megala	Swinhoe's Snipe
No	No	Gallinago stenura	Pin-tailed Snipe
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Isurus oxyrinchus	Shortfin Mako, Mako Shark
No	No	Lagenorhynchus obscurus	Dusky Dolphin
No	No	Lamna nasus	Porbeagle, Mackerel Shark
No	No	Limosa lapponica	Bar-tailed Godwit
No	No	Limosa limosa	Black-tailed Godwit
No	No	Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel
No	No	Macronectes halli	Northern Giant Petrel
No	No	Megaptera novaeangliae	Humpback Whale
No	No	Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Numenius madagascariensis	Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew
No	No	Numenius minutus	Little Curlew, Little Whimbrel
No	No	Numenius phaeopus	Whimbrel
No	No	Orcinus orca	Killer Whale, Orca
No	No	Pandion haliaetus	Osprey
No	No	Phoebetria fusca	Sooty Albatross
No	No	Physeter macrocephalus	Sperm Whale
No	No	Pluvialis fulva	Pacific Golden Plover
No	No	Pluvialis squatarola	Grey Plover
No	No	Rhincodon typus	Whale Shark
No	No	Sternula albifrons	Little Tern
No	No	Thalassarche bulleri	Buller's Albatross, Pacific Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche carteri	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche cauta	Shy Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche chrysostoma	Grey-headed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche eremita	Chatham Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche impavida	Campbell Albatross, Campbell Black-browed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche melanophris	Black-browed Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche salvini	Salvin's Albatross
No	No	Thalassarche steadi	White-capped Albatross
No	No	Thalasseus bergii	Greater Crested Tern
No	No	Tringa brevipes	Grey-tailed Tattler
No	No	Tringa glareola	Wood Sandpiper
No	No	Tringa nebularia	Common Greenshank, Greenshank
No	No	Tringa stagnatilis	Marsh Sandpiper, Little Greenshank

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Xenus cinereus	Terek Sandpiper

4.1.5.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.5.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The PMST report (see **Attachment D: Protected Matters Search**) documented 72 EPBC listed migratory species that may occur within the project area. Migratory species include 9 marine mammals, 3marine turtles 6sharks and 54 seabirds, shorebirds or marine migrants.

An assessment of potential impacts to these listed migratory species has been conducted in **Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**. This assessment concludes there are no significant impacts to migratory species as per the EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – MNES (2013), as the potential impacts are limited to the duration of the investigations, localised to within the areas of the investigations and due to the designed-in mitigations of the action. A summary of the impact pathways identified and assessed is included below, with a brief discussion of each impact is not considered significant. Further analysis is included in **section 6 of Attachment C**.

Underwater noise from geophysical investigation acoustic equipment or geotechnical investigations and associated vessels can lead to potential auditory impairment in noise-sensitive marine fauna in close proximity to sound sources, or localised and temporary behavioural disturbance to noise-sensitive marine fauna. As indicated in **section 6.1.1 of Attachment C**, underwater sound has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna species including marine mammals and turtles.

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that during geophysical investigations, the effects of noise on marine mammals are expected to be limited to a behavioural response within hundreds of metres. At this distance, there will be no significant impact to blue whales or other marine mammals that may be foraging in or migrating through the offshore investigation area during investigations. A behavioural response may occur out to several kilometres during geotechnical investigations, as a result of vessels maintaining position on DP during activities. However, the action has been designed to ensure the possibility of blue whales being behaviourally disturbed so as to limit their recovery is highly unlikely. The proposed action would also occur outside of southern right whale (SRW) reproduction BIA and a buffer area extending 3km from the BIA during the recognised SRW period of presence (April-October) and therefore it is unlikely that any SRWs will be encountered. However, in the event of temporal overlap, the proposed action has been designed to ensure there will be no significant impacts to SRWs that will interfere with the recovery of the population. As such, the proposed activity is not inconsistent with the National Recovery Plan for the SRW (DCCEEW 2024) and the Conservation Management Plan for the blue whale (2015), and underwater noise is not expected to generate any significant impacts.

Given the small spatial scale of the noise footprint, transient nature of other marine mammal species and proposed timing of investigations (primarily outside of humpback whale migration period), along with designed-in mitigations of the proposed action consistent with EPBC Act PS 2.1, the probability of disturbing any other listed migratory cetacean species is low.

During geophysical investigations, marine turtles could experience a behavioural response if they are within around 30 to 120 m of the noise source. However, given the lack of nesting areas and limited sightings of marine turtles in the Gippsland region, it is not likely that marine turtles would be significantly impacted by underwater noise during offshore investigations.

Seabed disturbance resulting from grab sampling, drilling boreholes, coring and potential anchoring has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna that are benthic foragers, including marine mammals and turtles (see **section 6.2 of Attachment C**).

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that due to large foraging ranges for benthic and pelagic foraging species, seabed disturbance is not expected to significantly impact foraging for migratory marine fauna. For most marine mammal and turtle species, seabed disturbance impacts are not expected to be significant because they and their habitat are typically widespread, and the disturbance will be localised and temporary

Drilling fluids/muds discharges associated with drilling boreholes leading to potential localised smothering has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna that are benthic foragers, including marine mammals and turtles (see **section 6.3 of Attachment C**).

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that the discharge of drilling waste is small in nature and scale and includes use of only OCNS D and E and CHARM gold and silver rated chemicals and so is not expected to generate any significant impacts to any listed migratory species.

Artificial light emissions from night-time operations have the potential to lead to disorientation or grounding of seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.4 of Attachment C**).

Unmanaged artificial lighting generated by the survey vessels could result in a behavioural response, e.g. disorientation leading to collision or grounding, displacement or navigational interference. To mitigate this, the action has been designed to ensure any potential impacts to seabirds (in particular albatross, petrels and shearwaters) are minimised by implementing lighting management in accordance with the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (DCCEEW, 2023). Subsequently, lighting impacts to seabirds are expected to be limited to individuals with no population level impacts on any EPBC Act listed seabird species. As such, no significant impacts to migratory seabird species are anticipated.

Atmospheric emissions from the investigation vessels causing temporary reductions in air quality has the potential to impact listed migratory seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.5 of Attachment C**).

Vessel emissions are expected to be dispersed rapidly by offshore winds, and seabird presence in the activity area are expected to be limited to vessel overfly. Shorebirds cannot swim and therefore, the offshore environment is not a suitable habitat for this group of birds. Given these factors, air emissions are not expected to reach high enough concentrations to have any impact on migratory seabird or shorebird MNES species.

Routine vessel discharges and/or accidental unplanned releases of hydrocarbons or chemicals has the potential to cause a temporary reduction in water quality and therefore impact marine fauna that transit nearby through the water column, including marine mammals, turtles, sharks, seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.6 of Attachment C**).

There may be temporary changes to water quality as a result of routine discharges during planned activities, however, with the total quantities of allowable discharges set through the MARPOL Convention, as outlined in **section 6.6.2 of Attachment C**, it is expected that these effects would be highly localised and restricted to the immediate area surrounding the discharge. Overall, any ecological effects are expected to be temporary, localised and unlikely to result in long-term harm. As such, routine discharge of vessel waste is not expected to generate any significant impacts to any listed migratory species.

Vessel collision with listed migratory species causing potential injury/death of an animal has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna, including marine mammals and turtles (see **section 6.7 of Attachment C**).

An assessment of this impact pathway determined that the likely sparse presence of listed migratory marine mammals and turtles, seasonal restrictions of the proposed action, potential displays of avoidance behaviour of the survey vessel and the control measures for noise that have been designed in to the potential action mean that the probability of colliding with any cetacean or marine turtle is low. As such, the proposed action is not inconsistent with species recovery plans and vessel collision risk is not expected to generate any significant impacts.

Equipment entanglement (towed equipment) causing potential injury has the potential to impact migratory marine fauna, including marine mammals, turtles and sharks (see **section 6.8 of Attachment C**).

The risks for marine fauna with regard to entanglement in marine debris is likely to be based on the frequency of encountering debris. With the activity designed to minimise the risk of escape of marine debris in the form of general vessel waste, the surveys would not contribute to the threat of marine debris

entanglement impacts on these species. Turtles are at particular risk from marine debris compared with other fauna, however the presence of marine turtles in the activity area is likely to be restricted to vagrant individuals and as a result, impacts to turtles from entanglement is highly unlikely. As such, the proposed action is unlikely to significantly impact on listed migratory species.

Accidental dropped objects overboard causing potential entanglement and injury of an animal has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna, including marine mammals, turtles and sharks (see **section 6.11 of Attachment C**).

With the control measures designed in to the proposed action, there is not expected to be a significant impact to any listed migratory species as a result of dropped objects.

Invasive marine species from vessel biofouling or ballast water can cause potential introduction or spread of invasive marine species in to an environment they were not previously found. This has the potential to impact listed migratory marine fauna, particularly any that are associated with the seabed, including marine mammals, turtles, sharks, seabirds and shorebirds (see **section 6.12 of Attachment C**).

The control measures designed in to the activity to prevent introduction of invasive species' impacts are not expected to generate any significant impacts to any listed migratory species.

4.1.6 Nuclear

4.1.6.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.6.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposed action does not involve Nuclear.

4.1.7 Commonwealth Marine Area

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Commonwealth marine area
No	Yes	EEZ and Territorial Sea
No	Yes	South-east Marine Region

4.1.7.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.7.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Potential impacts to the Commonwealth Marine Area are discussed in **section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment.** The proposed action is not anticipated to have significant impacts to the Commonwealth Marine Area or other MNES.

The project area is within Victorian and Commonwealth waters, extending from the shoreline to approximately 86 kilometres offshore. The project area sits within the South-east Marine Region which incorporates Commonwealth waters extending from the far south coast of New South Wales, around Tasmania and as far west as Kangaroo Island in South Australia.

It is probable that vessels used in the proposed action will transit from the Port of Welshpool to the activity area. Introduction and establishment of marine pests has the potential to occur through marine biofouling on vessels or investigation equipment transiting between port and the activity area, and transport through ballast water discharge. However, adequate mitigation measures will be implemented which would mean the establishment of invasive marine species through biofouling or ballast water discharge in the Commonwealth marine area is extremely unlikely. However, adequate mitigation measures will be implemented which would mean the establishment of invasive marine species through biofouling or ballast water discharge in the Commonwealth Marine Area is extremely unlikely.

The nature of the proposed action will mean that drilling from geotechnical activities will cause localised disturbances to the seabed. Direct physical impacts to habitats will be limited to localised seabed disturbance because of sediment sampling and boring; as (grab sampling coring drilling). There is potential for indirect effects to water quality due to routine and unplanned vessel discharges and drilling operations (fluids/muds), however these are likely to be short-term and localised.

No known World Heritage Properties, National Heritage Places or Commonwealth Heritage Places were identified through the PMST within the activity area.

4.1.7.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.7.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

The proposed action will be temporary and localised to the survey area. Each phase of the proposed action is short term, likely 4 – 8 weeks and no more than 24 weeks.

A review of impacts and risks against the Matters of National Environmental Significance – Significant impact guidelines 1.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (DoE, 2013) is included in **section 8 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report**, with further details in section 6 of that document. Under the significant impact criteria guidelines, a significant impact is defined as having consequence with regard to the intensity of the impact, which depends on the sensitivity, value and quality of the receptor and the intensity, duration, extent and magnitude of the impact. It is not expected that there will be any significant impacts to MNES, including to the Commonwealth Marine Area.

The assessment of impacts and risks against significant impact criteria for the Commonwealth Marine Area is summarised below:

- **Could the proposed action result in a known or potential pest species becoming established in the Commonwealth marine area?**

No; survey operations are short-term and confined to specific locations, reducing opportunities for pest species to be introduced or spread. As a result, the risk of introducing or establishing pest species through these survey activities is considered negligible and not significant.

- **Could the proposed action modify, destroy, fragment, isolate or disturb an important or substantial area of habitat such that an adverse impact on marine ecosystem functioning or integrity in a Commonwealth Marine Area result?**

No; the proposed action involves small-scale, highly localised seabed disturbance limited to discrete sampling sites, resulting in minimal physical impact relative to the broader habitat extent. The short duration and confined spatial footprint of survey activities mean that any disturbance would be temporary and unlikely to cause lasting fragmentation or isolation of habitats. Furthermore, the widespread occurrence of similar habitats across the Commonwealth Marine Area ensures that ecosystem connectivity and function would be maintained. Consequently, these survey activities pose a low risk of significant adverse effects on marine ecosystem integrity.

- **Could the proposed action have a substantial adverse effect on a population of a marine species or cetacean including its life cycle (for example, breeding, feeding, migration behaviour, life expectancy) and spatial distribution?**
- No; the proposed action is short in duration and spatially limited. This is likely to result in minimal and localised disturbances that are unlikely to impact breeding, feeding or migration on a population scale. The acoustic emissions from survey equipment operate at frequencies and intensities that, while detectable, do not generally cause lasting harm or displacement to marine fauna. Additionally, the widespread distribution and mobility of most marine species and cetaceans mean that temporary disturbances are unlikely to significantly affect overall population viability or reproductive success. Therefore, these surveys pose a low risk of substantial adverse effects on marine species populations and their life cycles.
- **Could the proposed action Result in a substantial change in air quality or water quality (including temperature) which may adversely impact on biodiversity, ecological integrity; social amenity or human health?**

No; the proposed action would generate negligible emissions and dust. Exhaust emissions would remain well below thresholds that could affect air quality. Consequently, there is no anticipated deterioration in air quality that could adversely impact human health, social amenity or biodiversity. In terms of water quality and temperature, the proposed action would avoid significant disturbance of surface water bodies or groundwater systems and the natural temperature regimes of the water body would remain unaffected. The low-impact nature of the surveys mean there is no substantial risk of adverse effects on air or water quality, biodiversity, ecological integrity, social amenity or human health.

- **Could the proposed action result in persistent organic chemicals, heavy metals, or other potentially harmful chemicals accumulating in the marine environment such that biodiversity, ecological integrity, social amenity or human health may be adversely affected?**

No; the proposed action would not result in the accumulation of persistent organic chemicals, heavy metals or other potentially harmful substances in the marine environment at levels that would adversely affect biodiversity, ecological integrity, social amenity or human health. These surveys would involve limited physical disturbance and typically do not involve the introduction or release of hazardous substances. The materials and equipment used are generally inert, and the scale of the activities is small relative to the vastness of the marine environment. Therefore, the potential for harmful chemicals to accumulate to ecologically or socially significant levels as a result of these surveys is negligible and not significant.

- **Could the proposed action have a substantial adverse impact on heritage values of the Commonwealth marine area, including damage or destruction of an historic shipwreck?**

No; the proposed action involves targeted, small-scale sampling and acoustic data collection conducted in specific, predefined locations, minimising the likelihood of physical disturbance to heritage sites. Survey planning will include consideration of heritage locations to avoid impacts. The limited spatial footprint and temporary nature of survey activities mean that any disturbance to seabed features, including shipwrecks, is unlikely. Consequently, these surveys pose a low risk of causing significant harm to the cultural heritage values within the Commonwealth Marine Area.

4.1.7.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.7.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment reviews the potential impacts, risks and control measures for the proposed action and finds there are no significant impacts to MNES expected as a result of the proposed action. Therefore, the proposed action is not a controlled action.

Mitigation and control measures that will be implemented to avoid or manage impacts are described in **section 6 of Attachment C: Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment.**

4.1.7.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

Mitigation measures for impacts to the Commonwealth Marine Area will be largely the same as those described for threatened and migratory species.

Implementation of these control measures will ensure that there will be no significant impacts as defined in the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance as a result of the action.

4.1.7.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

As the proposed action is not considered a controlled action, an offset plan is not required.

4.1.8 Great Barrier Reef

4.1.8.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.8.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposed project area does not intersect with the Great Barrier Reef.

4.1.9 Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas

4.1.9.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.9.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

This protected matter is not relevant to the proposed activity.

4.1.10 Commonwealth Land

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Commonwealth land area
Yes	Yes	Commonwealth Land -

4.1.10.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.10.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposed activity would not intersect with Commonwealth Land.

4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

4.1.11.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.11.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposed activity would not interact with any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas.

4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency

4.1.12.1 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Agency? *

No

4.2 Impact summary

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will likely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

None

Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will unlikely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage (S12)
- National Heritage (S15B)
- Ramsar Wetland (S16)
- Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S18)
- Migratory Species (S20)
- Nuclear (S21)
- Commonwealth Marine Area (S23)
- Great Barrier Reef (S24B)
- Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas (S24D)
- Commonwealth Land (S26)
- Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas (S27B)
- Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency (S28)

4.3 Alternatives

4.3.1 Do you have any possible alternatives for your proposed action to be considered as part of your referral? *

No

4.3.8 Describe why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible. *

High Sea Wind is one of 12 feasibility licence holders for offshore wind in Gippsland. The feasibility licence awarded to High Sea Wind is only valid for the approved licence area, and therefore alternative areas cannot be investigated. Similarly, the onshore grid connection point is being coordinated by VicGrid and has been nominated at a particular location onshore. Whilst there is room to adjust the corridor for the export cable that will connect the offshore project to the onshore grid, it will largely need to follow a certain direction to ensure it can connect at the right location.

There are no alternatives to undertaking the geophysical and geotechnical investigations, as they are required to design the foundation and substructures associated with the High Sea Wind project. Without carrying out the proposed action there is no way to complete the engineering work and approvals required to continue the project.

Due to the scarcity of specialised vessels used to conduct the surveys, and the seasonal exclusion for southern right whales, the timing for the proposed action is not flexible and there are no alternative timeframes that can be explored.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment A_Project Area Map.pdf Project Area Map	11/09/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Attachment B_Project Area Coordinates.pdf Project area coordinates	11/09/2025	No	High
#3.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025	No	High
#4.	Document	Attachment D_Protected Matters Search.pdf PMST results	13/07/2025		High

1.2.6 Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents that are relevant to the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

1.3.2.17 (Person proposing to take the action) Proposer's history of responsible environmental management

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment E_Ocean Winds HSSEQ Policy.pdf HSSEQ policy	28/02/2024	No	High

1.3.2.18 (Person proposing to take the action) If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation’s environmental policy and planning framework

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment E_Ocean Winds HSSEQ Policy.pdf HSSEQ policy	28/02/2024		High

3.1.1 Current condition of the project area's environment

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

3.1.3 Natural features, important or unique values that applies to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence

#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Document	Attachment D_Protected Matters Search.pdf PMST results	13/07/2025	No	High
#3.	Link	Assessing and Managing Impacts to Underwater Cultural Heritage in Australian Waters: Guidelines on t https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..	02/06/2024		High

3.1.4 Gradient relevant to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

3.3.1 Commonwealth heritage places overseas or other places that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment D_Protected Matters Search.pdf PMST results	13/07/2025		High

3.3.2 Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Link	Sea Country – an Indigenous perspective, The South-east			High

		Regional Marine Plan Assessment Reports https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..		
#2.	Link	Tararitja Sea Country https://tacinc.com.au/programs/land-and-sea-mana..		Medium

4.1.3.2 (Ramsar Wetland) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Link	Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/fil..			High
#3.	Link	Australian biofouling management requirements https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/fil..			High

4.1.3.6 (Ramsar Wetland) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Link	Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/fil..			High
#3.	Link	Australian biofouling management requirements https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/fil..			High
#4.	Link	Matters of National Environmental Significance – Significant impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High

4.1.3.9 (Ramsar Wetland) Why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action

Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1. Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

4.1.3.10 (Ramsar Wetland) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Link	Marine Order 97 (Marine pollution prevention — air pollution) 2022 https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L01550/asmad..			High
#3.	Link	National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High

4.1.4.3 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Document	Attachment D_Protected Matters Search.pdf PMST results	13/07/2025		High
#3.	Link	Conservation Management Plan for the Blue Whale https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#4.	Link	Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#5.	Link	National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#6.	Link	National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale Eubalaena			High

australis
https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..

4.1.5.3 (Migratory Species) Why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High
#2.	Document	Attachment D_Protected Matters Search.pdf PMST results	13/07/2025		High
#3.	Link	Conservation Management Plan for the Blue Whale https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#4.	Link	Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#5.	Link	National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High
#6.	Link	National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale Eubalaena australis https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High

4.1.7.2 (Commonwealth Marine Area) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

4.1.7.6 (Commonwealth Marine Area) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025	No	High
#2.	Link				

		Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High

4.1.7.9 (Commonwealth Marine Area) Why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Attachment C_ Marine Ecology and Impact Assessment Report.pdf Impact assessment report	11/09/2025		High

4.1.7.10 (Commonwealth Marine Area) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Link	Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..			High

5.2 Declarations

Completed Referring party's declaration

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	97117883173
Organisation name	RPS AAP CONSULTING PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 8, 31 Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
Representative's name	Lizy Gardner
Representative's job title	
Phone	
Email	lizy.gardner@rpsconsulting.com
Address	

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ By checking this box, I, **Lizy Gardner of RPS AAP CONSULTING PTY LTD**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

Completed Person proposing to take the action's declaration

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	55666331960
Organisation name	HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD
Organisation address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne
Representative's name	Rafael Munilla

Representative's job title	Chief Business Development Officer
Phone	+34 610500848
Email	rafael.munilla@oceanwinds.com
Address	Level 18, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ I, **Rafael Munilla of HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

✔ Completed Proposed designated proponent's declaration

The Proposed designated proponent is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ I, **Rafael Munilla of HIGH SEA WIND PTY LTD**, the Proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the Proposed designated proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

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