

SEA CCS Project

Attachment 07 – Description of consultation

Esso recognises and respects the important contribution of stakeholders, including Indigenous people, throughout ongoing operations and for new activities. Esso is committed to ensuring that stakeholders are identified, given sufficient information, and afforded reasonable time for consultation to allow them to make an informed assessment of the possible consequences of a proposed activity on them.

Esso's consultation objectives are to develop and maintain consistent and constructive relationships with relevant stakeholders with a genuine desire to further understand potential impacts and to encourage stakeholders to provide feedback to Esso during development and approvals for the Project.

For over 50 years, Esso has constructed and operated infrastructure in Gippsland, including within the Project area. Over this time, Esso has developed and maintained relationships with a broad range of stakeholders. Project specific engagement will be incremental to, and coordinated with, existing long-standing engagement with stakeholders.

Esso initially commenced project specific engagement with regulatory bodies in a combination of one-on-one and larger roundtable forums in November 2021. Early engagement with regulatory bodies was focused on providing an overview of the Project and clarifying regulatory requirements and timeframes in the emerging CCS regulatory landscape.

Esso has developed a Stakeholder Consultation Plan for the Project. This plan is available on the Esso website (see attached link).

Esso commenced project-specific engagement with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Council (GLaWAC) in September 2022, providing a Project overview and seeking feedback. Project specific consultation with GLaWAC continued through October and December 2022 as part of field surveys and engagement to support a cultural heritage standard assessment. Engagement with GLaWAC as part of field surveys to support the cultural heritage complex assessment and development of the associated Cultural Heritage Management Plan commenced in April 2023 with surveys completed in October 2023. Communications with GLaWAC have continued throughout 2023 and are on-going.

- GLaWAC provided a response to the Esso Consultation Questionnaire nominating to be consulted on specific activities including the SEA CCS Project (request acknowledged and followed-up).
- Esso's ongoing (phone and email) discussions with GLAWAC have included sea country mapping, with an offer from Esso to share geospatial and other information which may assist GLAWAC in mapping sea country for their Indigenous Protected Area Sea Country Plan development. Esso has requested information on sea country to further understand how any or all activities might impact on their cultural heritage (January 2023).
- The Esso Stakeholder Consultation Lead provided GLAWAC with a direct contact within NOPSEMA upon their request.
- Esso representatives attended the NOPSEMA facilitated National Summit on Consultation on Offshore Petroleum Activities with First Nations Peoples (Perth, 21-22 June 2023); and the Australian Energy Producers facilitated National Sea Country Alliance Summit (NSCAS) (Perth, 6-7 November 2023) which were also attended by GLaWAC representatives.

Esso considers these activities as relationship building as well as facilitating high level information sharing.

Esso also consults with the following commercial fishers via confirmed representation. The Esso Consultation Team has maintained relationships with commercial fishing representative groups for over a decade.

- SETFIA – Incorporated association representing commercial fishers in Commonwealth South East Trawl Sector; Scalefish Hook Sector; Shark Hook, Shark Gillnet Sectors; small pelagic fishery.
- SIV – Representative peak body for the Victorian seafood industry, from professional fishers, through to wholesalers, processors, and retailers

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- LEFL – Represents Lakes Entrance commercial fishing by providing a full-service unloading facility to the local fishing fleet. From here, fresh seafood is distributed to local shops.

Project-specific engagement with these commercial fishing representatives commenced in October 2022 (LEFL initial meeting) and continued via regular communications with all representative groups throughout 2023. Esso meets quarterly with the representative bodies; discussions have included the following points:

- Esso's early front-end engineering design (pre-FEED) studies to determine the potential for CCS to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from multiple industries in the Gippsland Basin
- High level CO₂ capture, transport, and storage discussions
- ExxonMobil's 30+ years of experience in capturing CO₂
- Timeline and regulatory approvals

SETFIA, SIV and LEFL are independently developing policies in response to industry activities in the Bass Strait. General points of interest include:

- defining commercial fisheries expectations regarding avoidance, mitigation, and management of impacts on the Commercial Seafood Industry associated with Marine Development
- describing commercial fisheries models for engagement with those undertaking Marine Development
- expectations in relation to on-going liability for in-situ infrastructure

Esso maintains positive and effective communications with all three groups; consultation is two-way dialogue and tailored to stakeholder needs.

In 2023, Esso broadened project specific engagement to the wider community. Esso held the first community information drop-in session for the Project in Lakes Entrance in April 2023. This session was advertised in The Australian, Herald Sun, Gippsland Times, South Gippsland Sentinel Times, Lake Post and Bairnsdale Advertiser, Snowy River Mail, La Trobe Valley Express and Koori Mail. Additional community information drop-in sessions for the Project have been held in:

- Sale in May and August 2023, advertised in the Gippsland Times, South Gippsland Sentinel Times, Lake Post and Bairnsdale Advertiser, Snowy River Mail, La Trobe Valley Express and Koori Mail.
- Hastings in August 2023, advertised in the Koori Mail, Herald Sun, and Western Port News.
- Lakes Entrance in April and August 2023, advertised in The Australian, Herald Sun, Gippsland Times, South Gippsland Sentinel Times, Lake Post and Bairnsdale Advertiser, La Trobe Valley Express and the Koori Mail.

The purpose of these regular sessions is to share an overview of the Project and regulatory approvals pathway, and to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to ask questions or share feedback so that concerns can be considered through the project's development. Esso prepared a fact sheet to be distributed at these sessions to help explain the Project (available on the Project webpage – see attached link).

Stakeholders engaged in relation to the Project between November 2021 and October 2023 are listed in **Att 02 – Summary of consultation**.

Esso will expand consultation for the Project to a wider range of stakeholders and provide further opportunities for community engagement. In addition to reviewing Esso's extensive consultation database that has been built through decades of operations, the following activities will be undertaken to actively seek out new stakeholders and to encourage stakeholders to self-identify:

- Using local knowledge of existing relationships to identify relevant stakeholders including marine users and interest groups active in the area e.g., indigenous groups, commercial fisheries, recreational fishers, other energy producers, local business, etc.
- Providing a link to the Consultation Hub and Esso Consultation Questionnaire with existing stakeholders and asking them to share it with anyone who may be interested in Esso's activities

- Seeking the advice of Indigenous groups such as land councils and prescribed body corporates in relation to who and how Indigenous groups or individuals should be consulted as stakeholders whose interests may be affected by the activities
- Searches of internet sources, including social media platforms etc.
- Identification of land owners/occupiers and near neighbours
- Members of Esso and/or its affiliates' local workforce providing suggestions of other potentially impacted stakeholders
- Identified stakeholders providing recommendations of other potentially impacted stakeholders, through direct engagement and/or Esso Consultation Questionnaire
- Guidance from relevant regulators, other government agency/department, industry associations or bodies about other potential stakeholders
- Advertisements in newspapers and other relevant news sources (e.g., Koori Mail, local papers)
- A review of legislation applicable to petroleum, greenhouse gas, and marine activities
- Active participation in industry bodies and collaborations e.g., Australian Energy Producers and CO2CRC
- Leveraging existing relationships with relevant Commonwealth and state departments and agencies to identify other relevant stakeholders
- Reviewing the stakeholders identified for other energy activities in the area
- Broad-based information sharing such as through the Esso website, *Connection* magazine, advertisements etc.

Consultation and engagement will continue throughout all stages of the Project, including during operations. A key element of Esso's consultation methodology is to review the consultation process and ensure stakeholder feedback is incorporated into the consultation process design. As a result, the nature and frequency of consultation activities are likely to evolve, however a preliminary program of consultation activities for the Project includes:

- Community drop-in sessions
- Meetings and phone calls with landholders and other key stakeholders
- Specialty group sessions e.g. First Nations People, community groups
- Community meetings
- Information bulletins
- Website and social media updates
- Presence at community events e.g., conferences, festivals
- Email updates
- Updates in *Connection* magazine

The Project was publicly advertised via a press release on April 14, 2022, followed by the launching of the Project webpage later the same month. This webpage contains information on the Project. Additionally, the Esso Consultation Hub, which provides stakeholders access to information on Esso's various current projects, was established in June 2023. The Esso Consultation Questionnaire is also accessible via the Consultation Hub and provides stakeholders a means to provide feedback on the Project (and other activities) and request further information.

Consultation has occurred with the following approval agencies:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) – Assessment and sea dumping teams

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- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) – Energy, Natural Environment Programs (Gippsland Region), Land & Built Environment (Gippsland Region) and Earth Resources teams
- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) – Planning team
- Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA) – Gippsland Region
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)
- National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA)
- VicRoads
- Wellington Shire Council
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Additionally for the onshore pipeline component of the project only, a Pipeline Consultation Plan (PCP) for the project was developed in accordance with the *Pipelines Act 2005* and was accepted by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (then Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) in July 2022 (see attached link).