

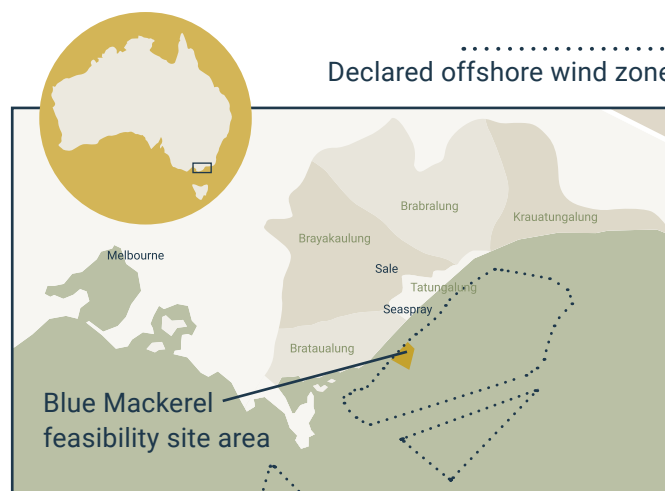
Project overview

The proposed Blue Mackerel offshore wind project is located off the coast of Brataualung and Tatungalung Country, Gippsland, approximately 10km from Seaspray, Victoria.

Blue Mackerel is positioned to be one of the first offshore wind projects to supply sustainable energy to Australian homes and industry.

Subject to approvals, Blue Mackerel would deliver its planned capacity of 1GW of renewable energy by 2032. That's enough to provide over half a million Victorian homes with green power.

Blue Mackerel received its feasibility license in April 2024. The project is in the feasibility and planning stage – it's at the beginning. Following environmental approvals, and attainment of a commercial licence, construction of the project would start in 2029. The project would be operational in 2032 for up to 40-years.



Project update

It has been a busy couple of months for the Blue Mackerel project team. We embarked on a jam-packed schedule of community and stakeholder consultation activities.

The findings of this consultation period will inform the development of the project's management plan for our upcoming geotechnical and wind and wave measurement surveys (to be undertaken in 2025). This information bulletin includes an overview of the consultation process and summarises the key outcomes.

In early November, the project started geophysical surveys in the Bass Strait. Before this important work could start, we received approval from the Commonwealth government, the works were referred to them under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation* (EPBC) Act (1999).

The geophysical surveys involve two vessels mapping the seabed in our feasibility licence area and between

this area and the shoreline. The data being collected through these surveys will help inform the scope of geotechnical and wind and wave surveys. It will also help us avoid areas with high environmental and cultural values. The findings will feed into the design of the wind turbines and layout of electrical cables. It is expected these will surveys will take up to 40 days and will be completed by the end of 2024.

The team has been engaging with the community during November. Over the past few weeks, we've come together with other developers to 'pop-up' in Foster, Traralgon and Seaspray. We have one more event planned for this year – the Yarram Agricultural Show, you can meet us there on Saturday 23 November.



Blue Mackerel marine surveys

Careful work is underway to better understand the metocean conditions, ocean floor and seabed conditions within the Blue Mackerel feasibility area. One of the first steps is to undertake geophysical, geotechnical, wind and wave (FLiDAR) and other environmental surveys. These surveys will help inform detailed planning, environmental and engineering assessments that will be completed over the next four years.

2024		2025	
Geophysical surveys	Environmental surveys	Geotechnical surveys	Wind and wave surveys
Commence in November 2024	Commence in early 2025	Subject to Management Plan approval – to commence in first half of 2025	

Location of the marine surveys

The marine surveys will be undertaken across two areas.

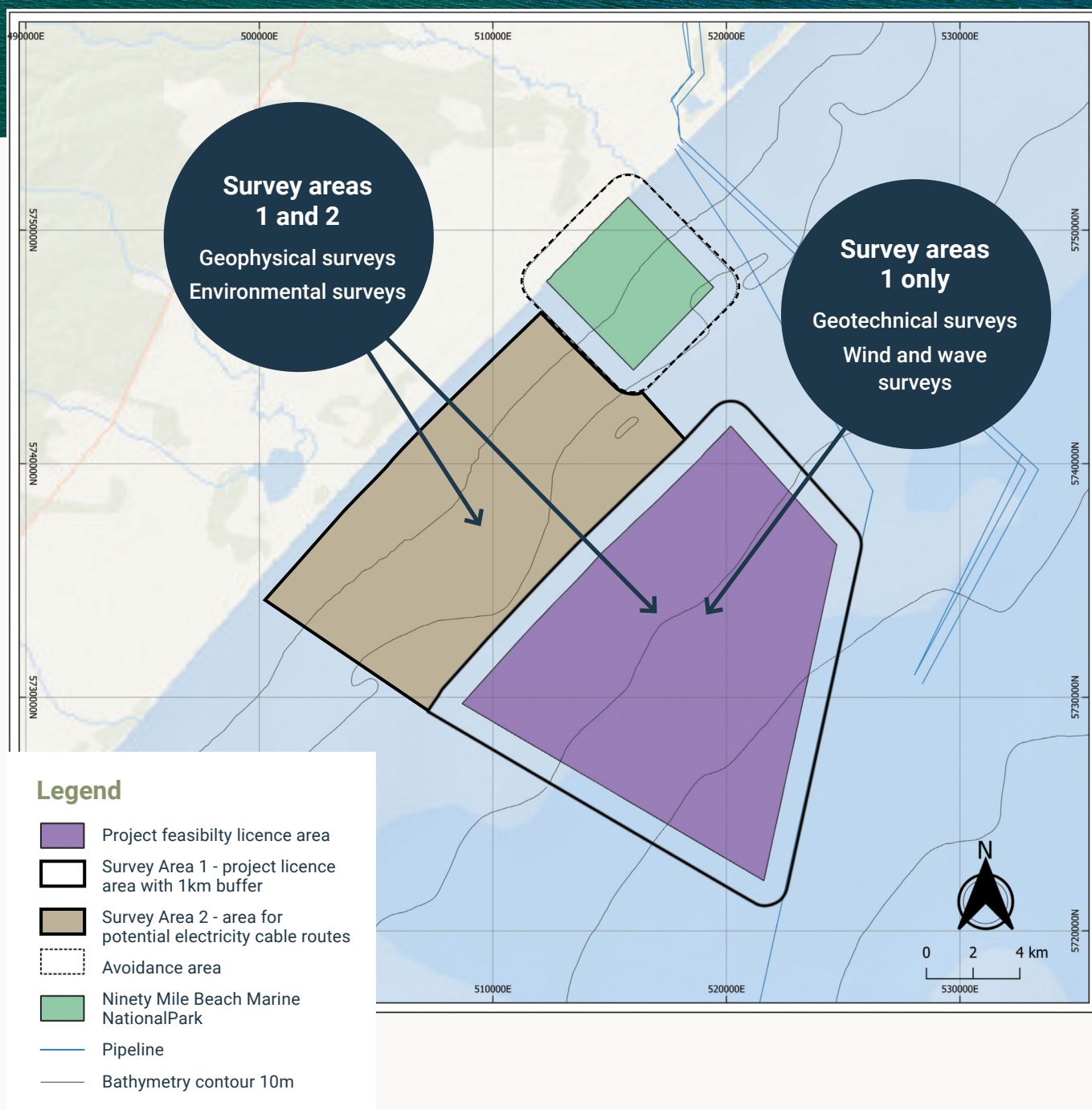
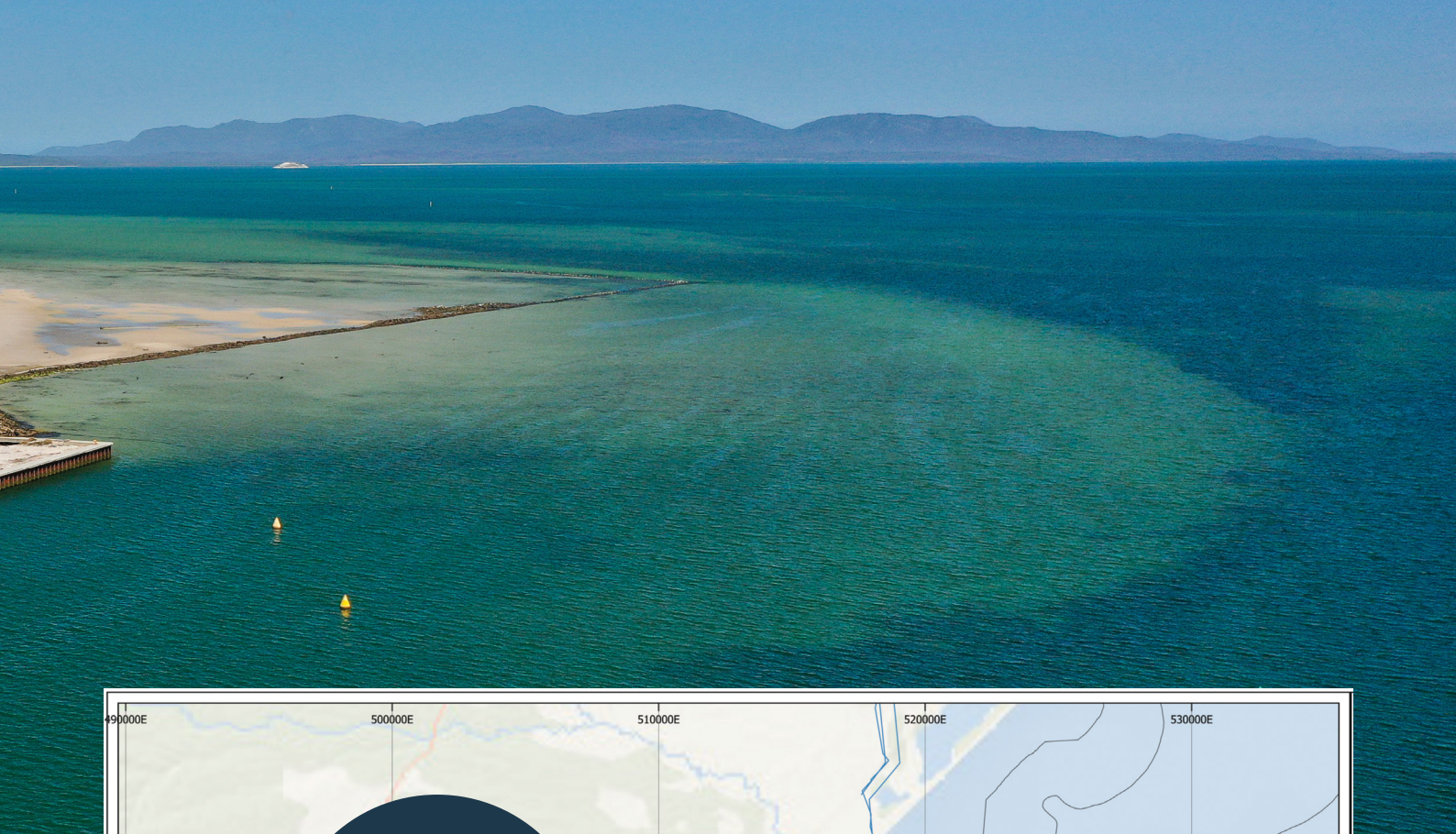
Survey Area 1 includes the licence area, plus a one-kilometre buffer to allow data to be collected right to the edge of the licence area.

Survey Area 2 covers the area where Blue Mackerel will investigate potential routes for the electricity cables which will export the power between the offshore wind turbines and the onshore substation.

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people, the Traditional Owners of the land and waters where the proposed Blue Mackerel offshore wind project will be located. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We aspire to a genuine partnership with the Gunaikurnai people that delivers mutual benefit and enhanced stewardship of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

We acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of all First Nations peoples for their lands and waters where we operate.





We're taking to the water – geophysical surveys are underway

In a significant milestone for the project, our geophysical surveys kicked off in the Bass Strait on 12 November. This 40-day survey campaign will involve two vessels mapping the seabed and gathering data about the submerged landscape.

Our larger vessel, the “Offshore Surveyor,” launched from Port Anthony and will remain at sea for the duration of its survey activities in the deeper waters of the project’s feasibility licence area.

Our smaller vessel, the “Special Order” is departing daily from McLoughlin Beach. It is surveying the shallower waters between the project’s feasibility licence area and the shore.

The information gathered through these surveys will inform the scope of our upcoming geotechnical and wind and wave surveys. They’re planned for the first half of 2025.

The survey data will also help inform engineering assessments and design for the wind turbine and potential routes for the export cables. These cables will run along the seabed, and underground at the shore and will carry the wind-generated energy to the onshore transmission connection point into the national grid.

The project team was joined by Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh on Thursday 7 November to mark the launch of the Offshore Surveyor and her crew of 15 survey personnel.

Meet the project team

Kim Downs

Environmental Planning & Approvals Manager

The Blue Mackerel project team is delighted to welcome our new Environmental Planning and Approvals Manager, Kim Downs. An environmental scientist with 20 years of technical experience in the fields of environmental management, impact assessment, regulatory approvals and ecology – Kim is delighted to be supporting the transition to offshore and renewable energy development in Gippsland.

“It’s an exciting time in the transition to renewable energy – both in Gippsland, and more broadly across Australia. I’m looking forward to being part of one of Australia’s first offshore wind projects and helping to shape the Blue Mackerel project to deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes,” she said.

Kim is a keen but (self-proclaimed) extremely slow bushwalker, always pausing to examine flowers and insects or to watch the birds.

Welcome Kim!



Out and about in Gippsland in Spring

Our team has been out and about in Gippsland. We've enjoyed the opportunity to meet with many local residents, businesses and community members who attended various community drop-in sessions.

We have had more than 300 conversations at these events. We heard the key areas of community interest relate to: managing environmental impacts to marine and bird life, retaining access to fishing, minimising visual impacts, collaborating with other offshore wind proponents to manage cumulative impacts, job creation, sharing relevant and equitable community benefit and preparing for ultimate decommissioning of offshore wind farms in an environmentally sensitive way.

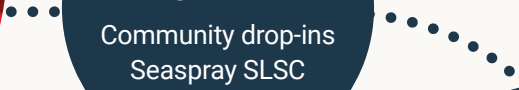
**3-5
September**

Gippsland New Energy
Conference and Gippy
Youth Summit



**19-20
September**

Community drop-ins
Seaspray SLSC



**21
September**

Community drop-in
Sale Producers Market



**8
November**

Community drop-in
Seaspray SLSC



**13
November**

Community drop-in
Foster



**14
November**

Community drop-in
Traralgon



**23
November**

Community drop-in
Yarram Agricultural
Show





Marine survey consultation process

A key outcome of our engagement over the past few months has been the development of a Management Plan. It's required to be reviewed and approved by the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) before any marine surveys that make contact with the seabed can start. For the Blue Mackerel project, this includes geotechnical and wind and wave surveys which are planned in the first half of 2025.

Objectives

Consultation undertaken for our marine surveys Management Plan was underpinned by these principles and objectives, as outlined in the project's referral under the EPBC Act (1999).

Hazard	Avoidance, management and mitigation measures
Education and information	• Ensure stakeholders (including the community) are provided with accessible information and informed about the project, the process, and their opportunities to provide input and feedback. • Provide information about the project using clear, concise, and culturally appropriate language and relevant imagery to aid understanding.
Meaningful consultation	• Work with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners to understand their aspirations for their Country and peoples, and potential economic and community contribution of the project. • Work with stakeholders to discuss the project and identify issues and opportunities. • Provide opportunities for community members to identify themselves as interested stakeholders and participate in engagement activities. • Provide answers to stakeholder queries in a timely manner or advising when information would be available to answer questions. • Be proactive when issues arise to ensure stakeholder groups and the community have correct information and the opportunity to voice their concerns. • Create and maintain quality working relationships with key stakeholders and the community.
Close the loop	• Demonstrate how stakeholder feedback has been heard, considered, and used to inform the development of the project and communicated back to the community. • Provide feedback to stakeholder groups and the community about the outcomes of engagement activities. • Ensure the principles we have established for stakeholder and community engagement guide project decisions, approaches, and engagement execution.
Rights-based	• Take guidance from the Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners on consultation approaches and on stakeholders to be consulted. • Consult and cooperate with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners in 'good faith' to obtain 'free, prior, and informed after consent. Replace with: consent. • Obtain consent or approval from Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners of any inputs to any project outputs before their issue.

Who we engaged with

Given the broad range and geographical spread of interested community members and stakeholders, information was provided via different formats and engagement methods.



Community mail-out 2000 local homes and businesses	Newspaper advertisements x4 reaching 15,000 people per local media (3) advertisement and 100,000 per Koori Mail (1)	1:1 meetings with 30+ stakeholders and groups
Project Overview brochure	Information Bulletins x2	e-updates x3 distributed to 285 stakeholders across 196 organisations
Information stand at GNEC and Gippy Youth Summit	Project community drop-in sessions x3	Developer community drop-in sessions x4
Direct engagement with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Face to face visits to First Nations community controlled organisations across Gippsland	Emails, phone calls, posted information and offers of briefing to First Nations community-controlled organisations across Victoria, northern Tasmania and the south-coast of New South Wales
Online engagement hub	Online survey	Project webinar
LinkedIn posts x 5	Project information line	Email inbox

What we heard

Overall, there were limited enquiries, claims or objections raised regarding the project's geotechnical and wind and wave measurement surveys. For the limited concerns raised, we carefully assessed the merits of the claims or objections, and (where appropriate) adopted new or changed control measures to reduce the relevant risks or impacts to an acceptable level and as low as reasonably practicable.

Feedback	Raised by	Project's response
Maintain fishing availability during marine surveys	Online survey respondent (identified as recreational fisher)	Fishing access will be retained during the marine survey campaigns for both recreational and commercial operations. Where short-term, temporary restrictions may be required (for marine safety), the project will work closely with affected users to provide advance notice and communicate alternative arrangements.
Be mindful of migration of marine and bird life in the proposed area during surveys	Online survey respondent (identified as beach-goer)	The purpose of the project's environmental surveys is to identify and understand marine and bird species present in the survey area and their migratory patterns. This will inform the approach taken by the project to minimise any impact to marine and bird life during the marine survey period.
There is the potential for cultural connection to migratory species that traverse the Land and Sea Country where the marine surveys will be undertaken.	First Nations	The project expanded our engagement across Victoria, northern Tasmania and the south-coast of New South Wales to reach a broader range of First Nations communities and inform them of our surveys and seek their feedback.
The project should engage suitably qualified marine archaeologists to support geotechnical investigations.	Heritage Victoria	The project has consulted further, including with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GlaWAC), to identify, confirm and engage a suitable marine archaeologist to work with the project.
The project should ensure comprehensive engagement with fishing representative bodies (Seafood Industry Victoria, Rock Lobster Resource Advisory Group, VR Fish and Abalone Council)	Victorian Fishing Authority	The project followed up with Seafood Industry Victoria, Rock Lobster Resource Advisory Group, VR Fish and Abalone Council and requested briefings / shared information.
The project to share information proactively regarding timing, location of its marine surveys to enable stakeholder to adequately coordinate with their own operations.	Esso Orsted Southerly Ten Iberdrola Palisade	The project has established productive two-way engagement with all adjacent licence holders / offshore wind developers and will proactively coordinate survey activities with these stakeholders.
The project should coordinate survey efforts with other offshore wind proponents to minimise potential cumulative impacts.	Victorian National Parks Association	The project is collaborating with other offshore wind proponents via Offshore Gippsland advisory committees (monthly meetings to coordinate, communicate and collaborate on development activities).

Other matters raised

Broader issues, outside the scope of the marine surveys management plan consultation related to a range matters. These will continue to be investigated and consulted upon as we move forward with our design development and environmental assessment activities.

Community benefits – how will these be identified and shared equitably?	Management of visual impact to the shoreline – what will the turbines look like from Seaspray and Giffard?	Jobs creation and training opportunities for Gippsland locals
Connection to the grid / transmission – will the export cables be above / below ground?	Decommissioning – how is this being planned for in an environmentally sustainable way?	Availability of fishing – can recreational and commercial fishers continue fishing in this area?
How will the project mitigate impacts to eco-tourism for this area, and the 90 Mile Marine National Park?	Port strategy – which ports will the project use for construction and operations?	Environmental impacts – how will the project avoid impact to marine and bird life during construction and operations?

Next steps

We are currently finalising our marine surveys management plan and anticipate submitting it to the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) as soon as the Commonwealth government's regulations are finalised.

We are continuing to update our project website and respond to any enquiries received via our project email address and information line. We look forward to carrying out more engagement with stakeholders and local communities in the coming months as we progress our engineering investigations and design development.







Get in touch

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