



Environmental Protection

Protecting the environment when we construct and operate an offshore wind farm is vitally important. Over the next two years Blue Mackerel will be carrying out comprehensive studies and impact assessments of the environment in our Feasibility licence area (see map on page 4).

Using a range of scientific methods, we will study local shorebirds, seabirds, marine mammals, fish and fishing activity, cultural features, among other assessments. These studies will contribute to a broad and detailed assessment of potential impacts and measures to avoid and minimise impacts that will guide the windfarm design and ensure we meet stringent regulatory requirements.

How will we share our findings?

Once complete, our environmental studies will be released for public review as part of the formal approvals process.

The completed detailed studies will be publicly exhibited in an Environmental Impact Statement under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* assessment processes and potentially an Environment Effects Statement or Environment Report under the *Victorian Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The public will be invited by the relevant Ministers and/or delegates to provide comments on both the scoping requirements for the studies and the final studies and impact assessments. Depending on the determination of the relevant Ministers the assessment process may also include a public hearing, which can be attended by the community and at which, members of the public who have made submissions can choose to present them.

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.

Our environmental assessments include



Humpback whale (image: RPS)

Marine mammals

Conducting aerial and boat-based surveys for whales, dolphins and seals and using underwater microphones (hydrophones) to detect calls, a process called passive acoustic monitoring. Modelling underwater noise from the project activities to understand potential impacts to marine mammals and other species during construction, operation and decommissioning.



*Scarlet Robin (above)
Giant Petrel (left)
(images: RPS)*

Seabirds and shorebirds

Undertaking boat-based and camera surveys to understand bird presence, flight heights, behaviour and habitats. Collision risk modelling will be used to assess potential interactions with turbines and enable optimal distance of the bottom tip of the turbine blade from the ocean surface to maintain a clear area for flight paths.

Seafloor and intertidal habitats

Surveying seafloor and intertidal zones using remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), cameras and grab samples to assess potential impacts to benthic (seabed, sediments, and ocean bottom organisms) environments and marine ecology.

Seascape, landscape and visual

Assessing potential visual impacts of offshore infrastructure, including turbines and substations, on key viewpoints, coastal communities and tourist sites.



Public amenity (noise, air quality and traffic)

Assessing potential changes to public amenity, including construction-related noise, dust and traffic impacts on local residents and communities. As the construction and maintenance activities are primarily marine based, this assessment is focused around the buried electricity export cables.

Shipping and navigation

Assessing how project vessels and infrastructure may interact with existing shipping routes and navigation safety. This includes identifying potential hazards and co-existence strategies.

Aviation

Assessing if there could be any impacts of offshore turbines and infrastructure on aviation safety, including airspace use and visibility.

Waterways, flooding and groundwater

Assessing impacts to surface water, floodplains and groundwater during onshore construction of buried electricity export cables. This includes erosion risks, sedimentation, and changes to water flow.

Coastal processes

Assessing if offshore infrastructure could affect wave patterns, current flow and sediment transport along the coast and seabed.



*Crested Tern (left)
Australian Fur Seal
(below) (images: RPS)*



Fish and sharks

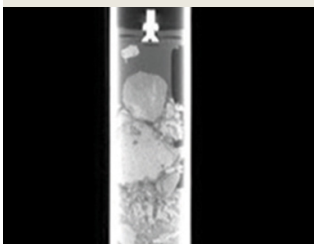
Using baited remote underwater video and shark detectors (for tagged sharks) to understand potential impacts and benefits to fish, sharks and other marine species from offshore construction, operation and decommissioning activities. Benefits can come from creating habitat for marine species at the base of turbines.

Fishing (commercial and recreational)

Understanding the potential impacts and benefits to commercial and recreational fishers during construction, operation and decommissioning of the offshore wind project.

Submerged cultural heritage

Conducting submerged landscape assessments with guidance from the GLaWAC, marine archaeologists and underwater cultural heritage specialists to identify and assess potential impacts to underwater cultural heritage sites.



Core samples of the seabed taken from our feasibility licence area viewed with x-rays

Cultural heritage (onshore)

Assessing and avoiding, in collaboration with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), potential impacts to Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage places on land, including scarred trees, artefacts and known heritage sites.

Ecology (onshore)

Understanding potential impacts to native vegetation and terrestrial wildlife from the construction and operation of onshore infrastructure.

Soil and waste

Identifying and assessing risks from existing contaminated land and potential acid sulfate soils in onshore areas and waterways and how these would be managed during construction.



*Common Donkey Orchid
(image: K. Downs)*

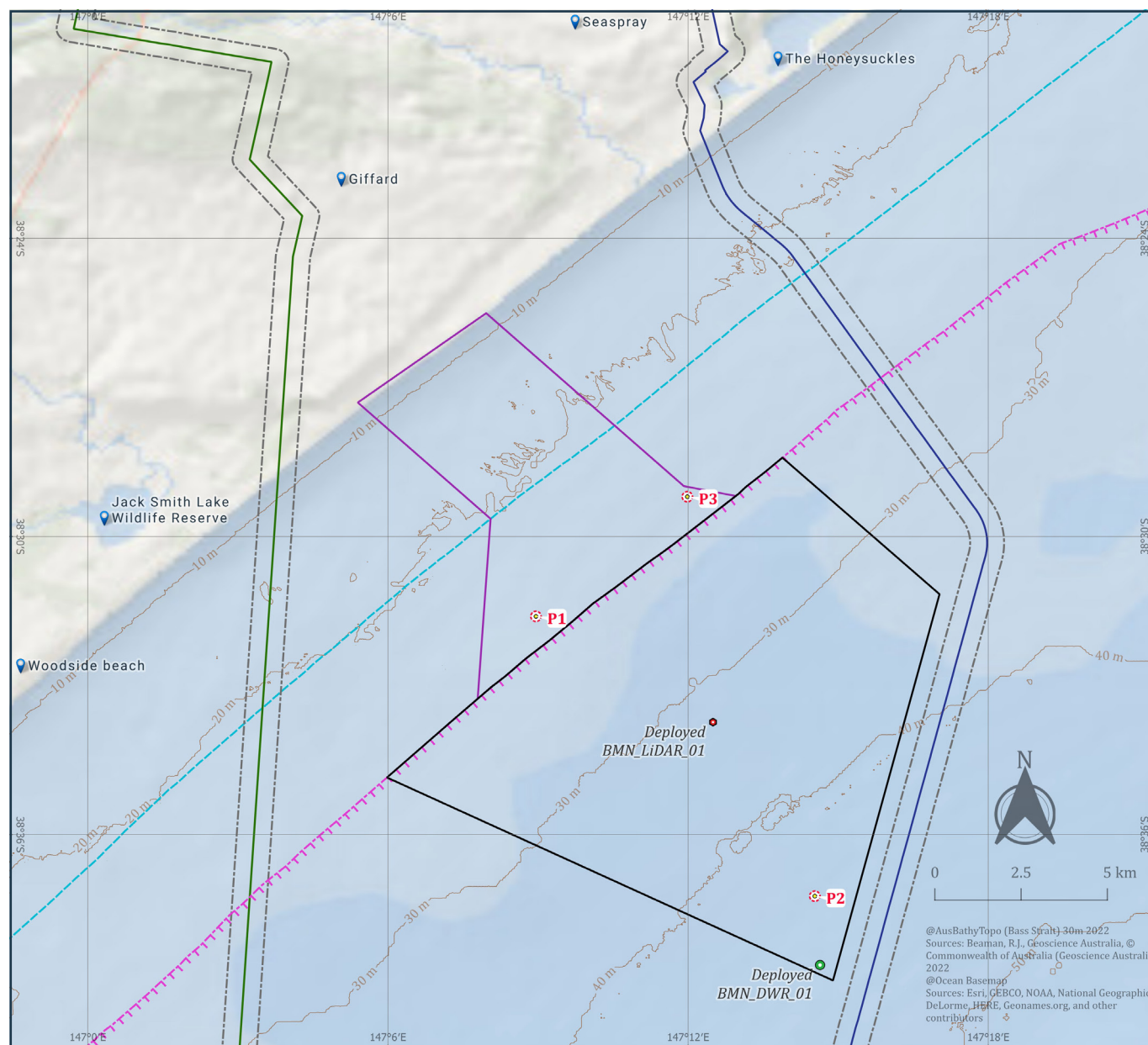
Electromagnetic fields (EMF)

Modelling and assessing if there is likely to be any impacts of electromagnetic fields from underwater transmission cables on marine species such as fish and sharks.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Assessing potential impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, including emissions from construction activity through to contributions to reduced emissions through renewable energy generation.

Map of our area



Legend

	BMN Feasibility licence area		State water boundary		Bathymetry contours		Passive acoustic monitors (PAM) & Acoustic telemetry (150m buffer*)
	BMN Export cable corridor		Electricity line		Directional waverider		LiDAR
	Declared area OEI-01-2022		Pipeline				

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