



Offshore
Infrastructure
Regulator

Regulating offshore renewables

University of Western Australia

21 August 2025

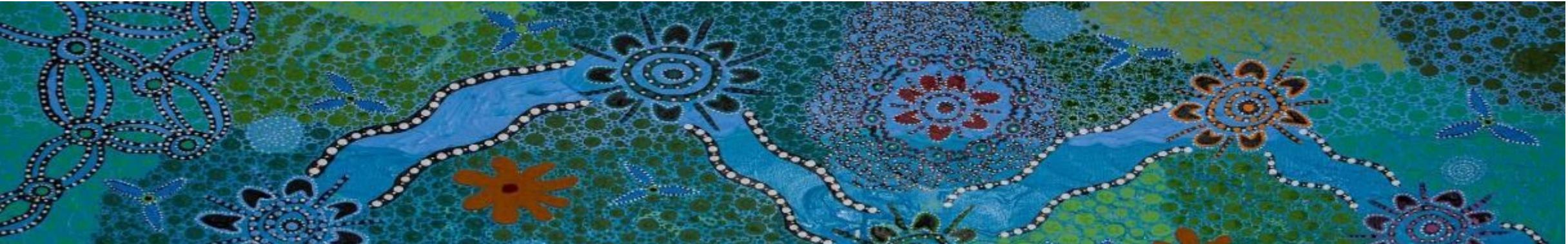
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Offshore Infrastructure Regulator



Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Whadjuk people of Noongar Boodjar, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respect to Elders past, and present.



Outline

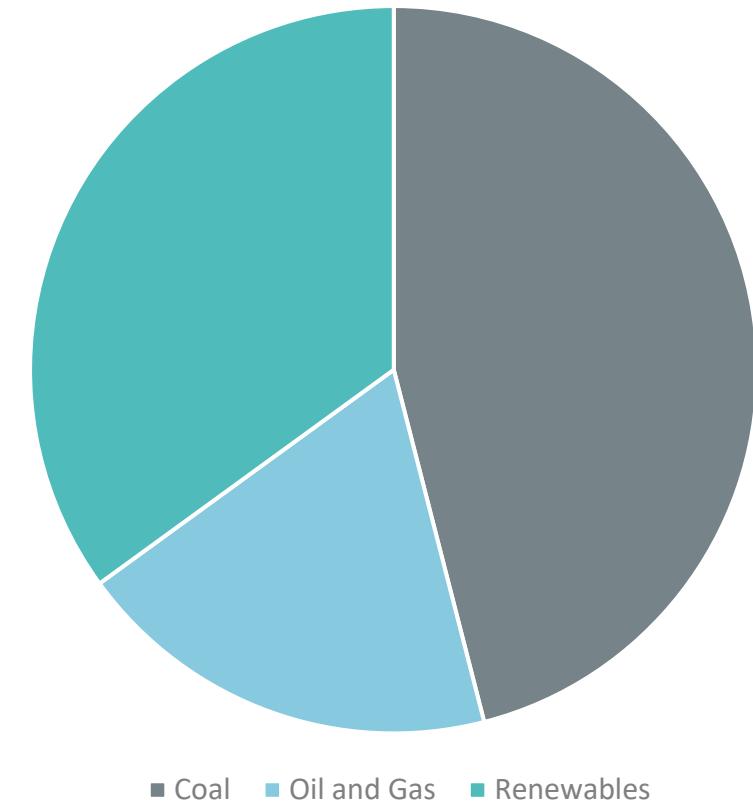
- Setting the scene
- The regulatory framework
- The current state of play
- Looking forward



Setting the scene - Australian Government energy policy

- Net zero economy by 2050
- 43% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030
- 82% of electricity supplied by renewable energy sources by 2030
- Secure, reliable and affordable electricity
- Victoria has legislated 9GW of offshore wind by 2040

Electricity generation in Australia 2023



■ Coal ■ Oil and Gas ■ Renewables



Australian Energy Statistics 2022-23

Energy consumption up
▲2.0%

First time in 4 years

28%
Over the decade
(Economic output/energy consumption)
Energy productivity improvement



Highest on record

35%
Electricity generation from renewables in 2023

Transport sector energy use up
▲12% A white icon of a car with a steering wheel and front grille.

Transport accounts for 28% of energy consumption in 2022-23

▲20%
Highest on record
Growth in solar generation in 2023

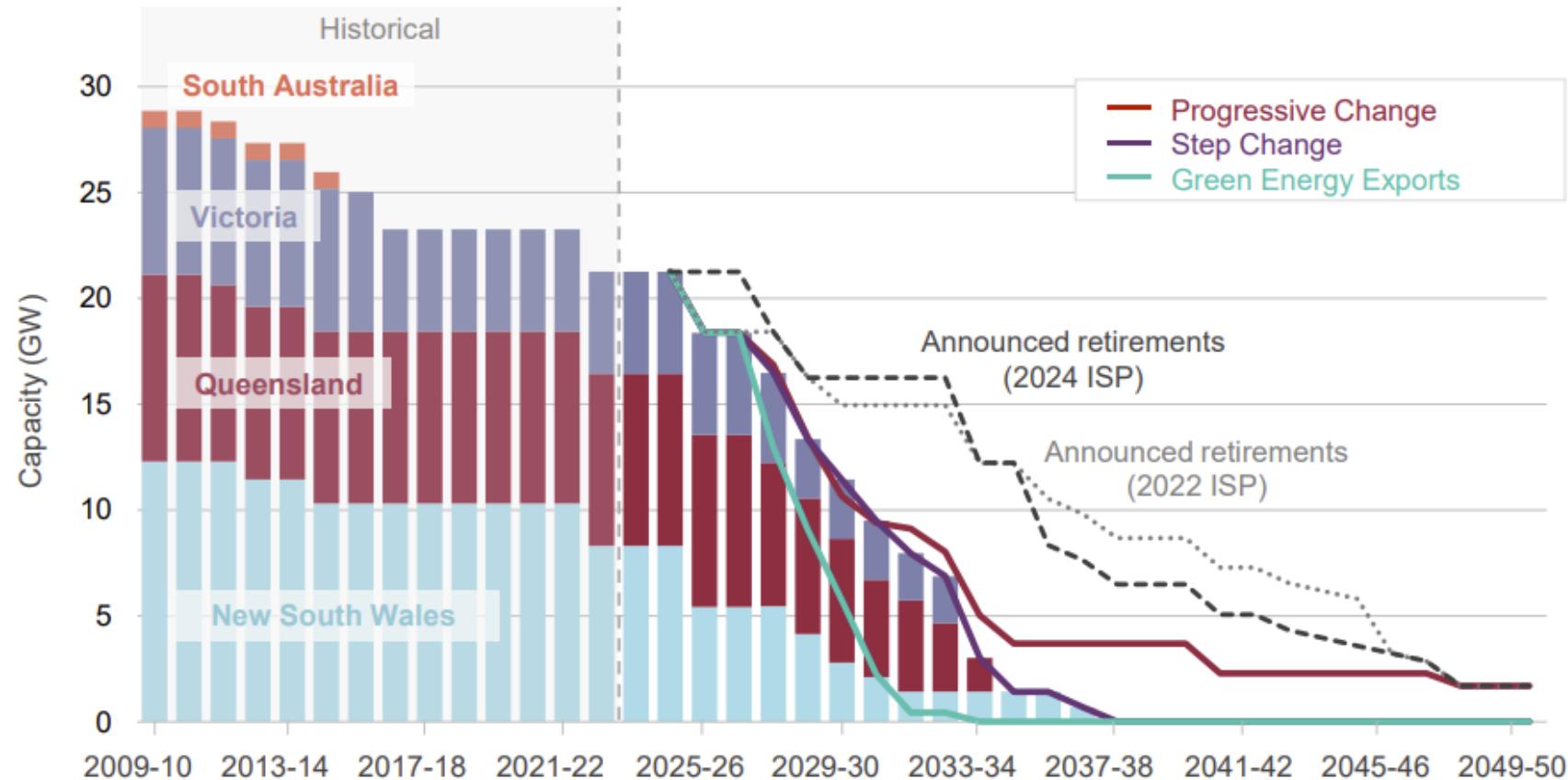
3% Residential use down

4% Commercial use up



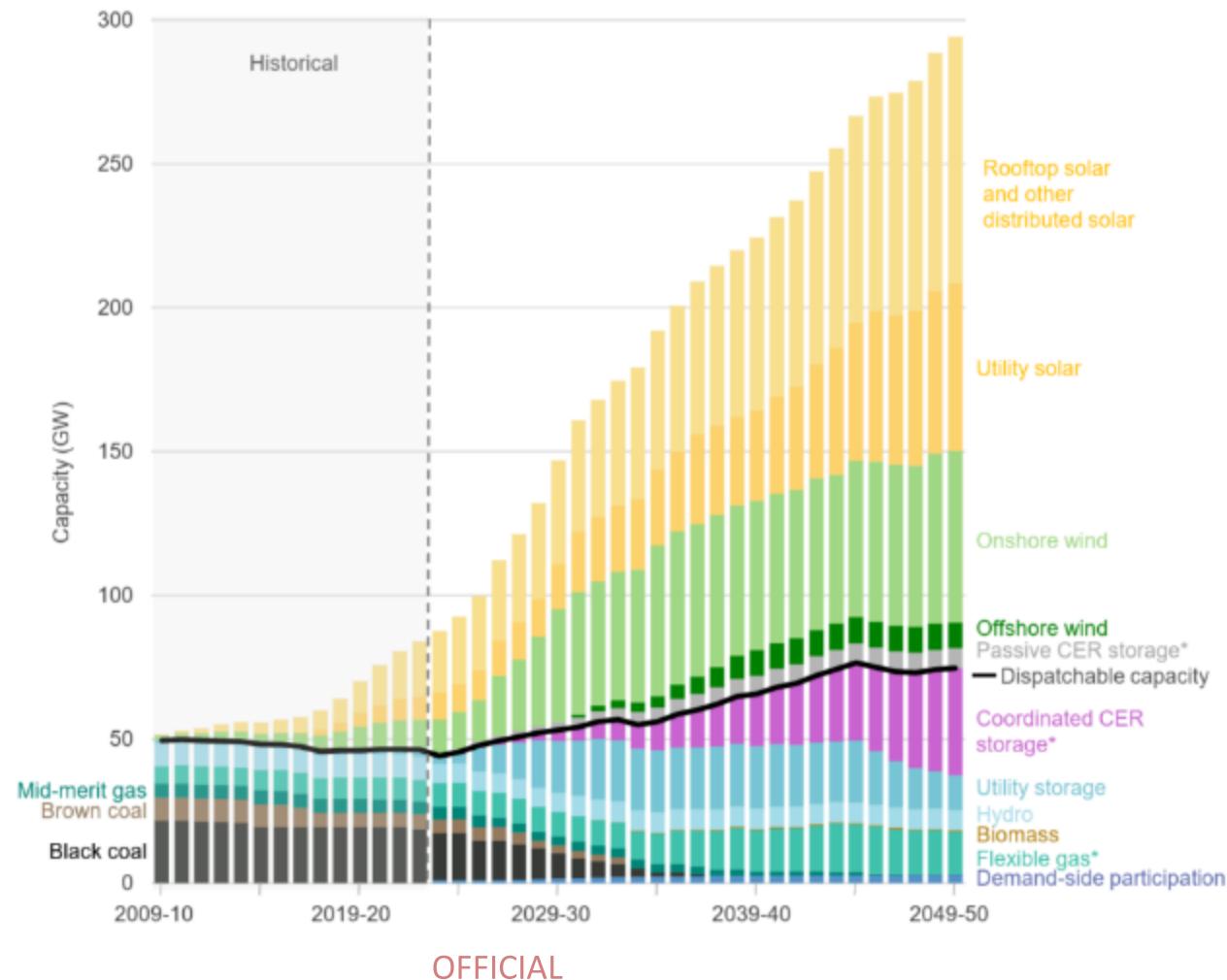
What are the drivers for renewable energy?

Figure 1 Coal capacity, NEM (GW, 2009-10 to 2049-50)

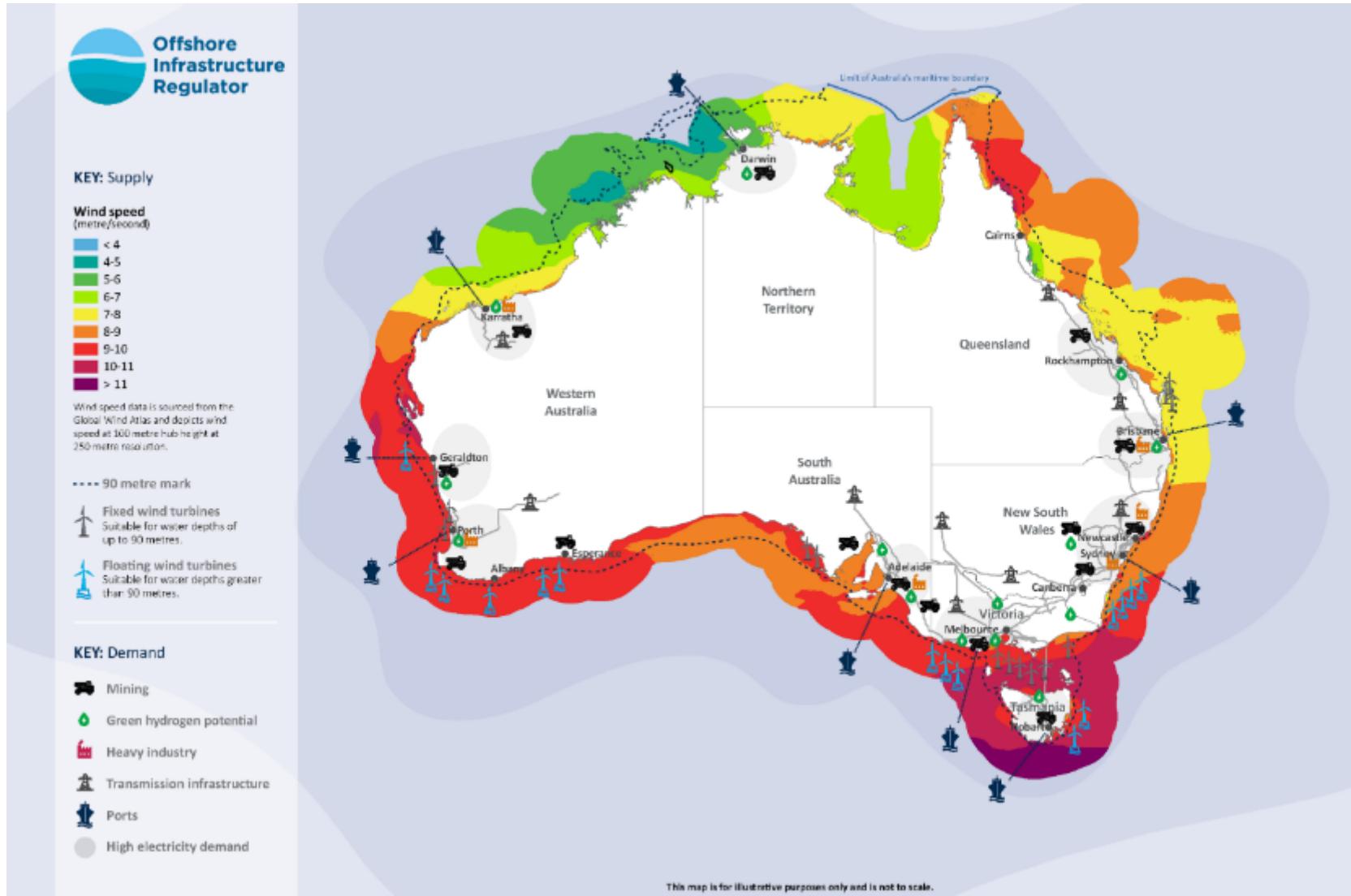


Where do we need to get?

Figure 2 Capacity, NEM (GW, 2009-10 to 2049-50, Step Change)



Supply and demand potential for offshore wind energy





Why go offshore?

- Larger turbines with higher capacity factors
- Strong, consistent wind speed and direction
- Ability to complement solar generation profile
- Proximity to demand centres and established grid
- Visual amenity, noise pollution and other social impacts reduced
- Potential for reduced impacts to birds, bats and habitats
- Reduced land use competition
- Abundance of space and potential to go further offshore with floating technology
- Reduced transport and logistical constraints

The Offshore Infrastructure Regulator



- Established under the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021*
- The OIR has responsibility for overseeing WHS, infrastructure integrity and environmental management for offshore infrastructure activities in the Commonwealth offshore area (>3NM - 200NM)
- OEI Act is administered by the Minister for Climate Change and Energy.



Regulatory roadmap

For commercial scale offshore renewables projects in Australia under the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act Framework*

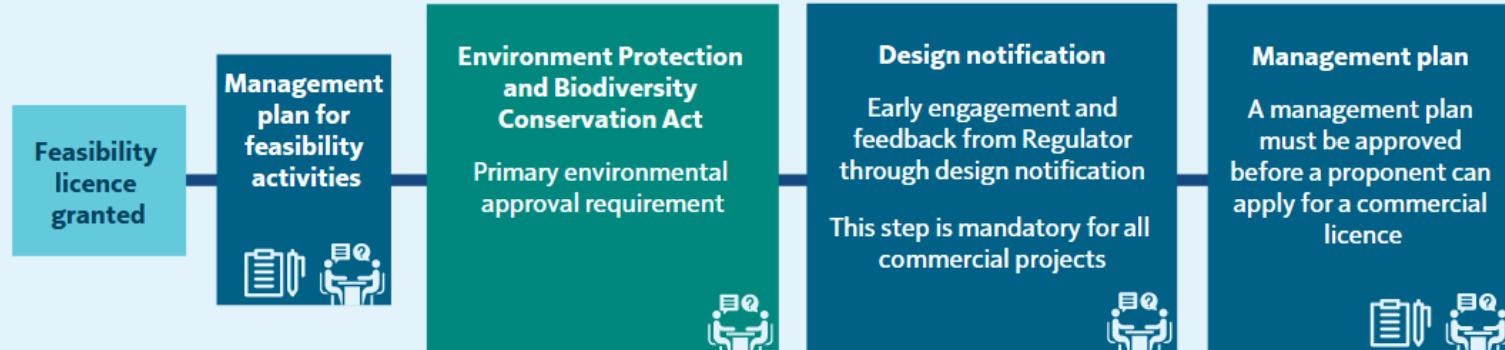


Pre-licencing, 12 months



Feasibility licence, up to 7 years

Relevant state and territory approvals may also be required



Commercial licence, up to 40 years

A management plan for commercial licence activities must be revised periodically, throughout the life of a project



LEGEND



Opportunities for consultation



Compliance and enforcement



Minister for Energy



Offshore Infrastructure Registrar



The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water



Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

*A transmission and infrastructure licence may also be required, this process is not addressed here

Key decision makers

Minister for Climate Change and Energy

- Declaration of areas
- Granting of licences

Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water

- Policy and regulatory development
- Identification of areas and support to Minister on declarations

Offshore Infrastructure Registrar

- Assessment of licence applications
- Provision of advice to Minister
- Ongoing licence administration

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

- Design notification
- Management plan
- Financial security
- Safety & protection zones



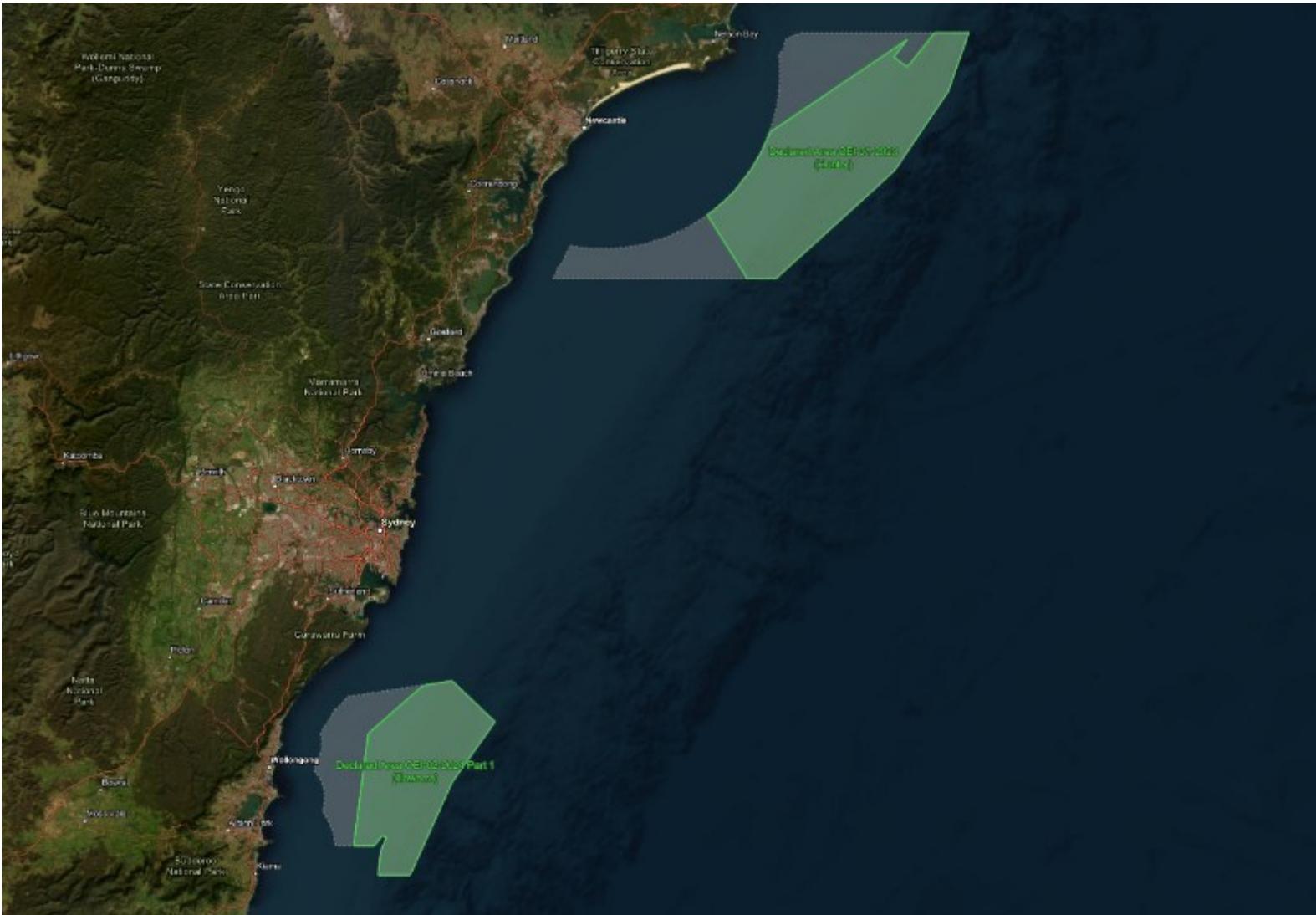
Declared areas – Victoria, Tasmania



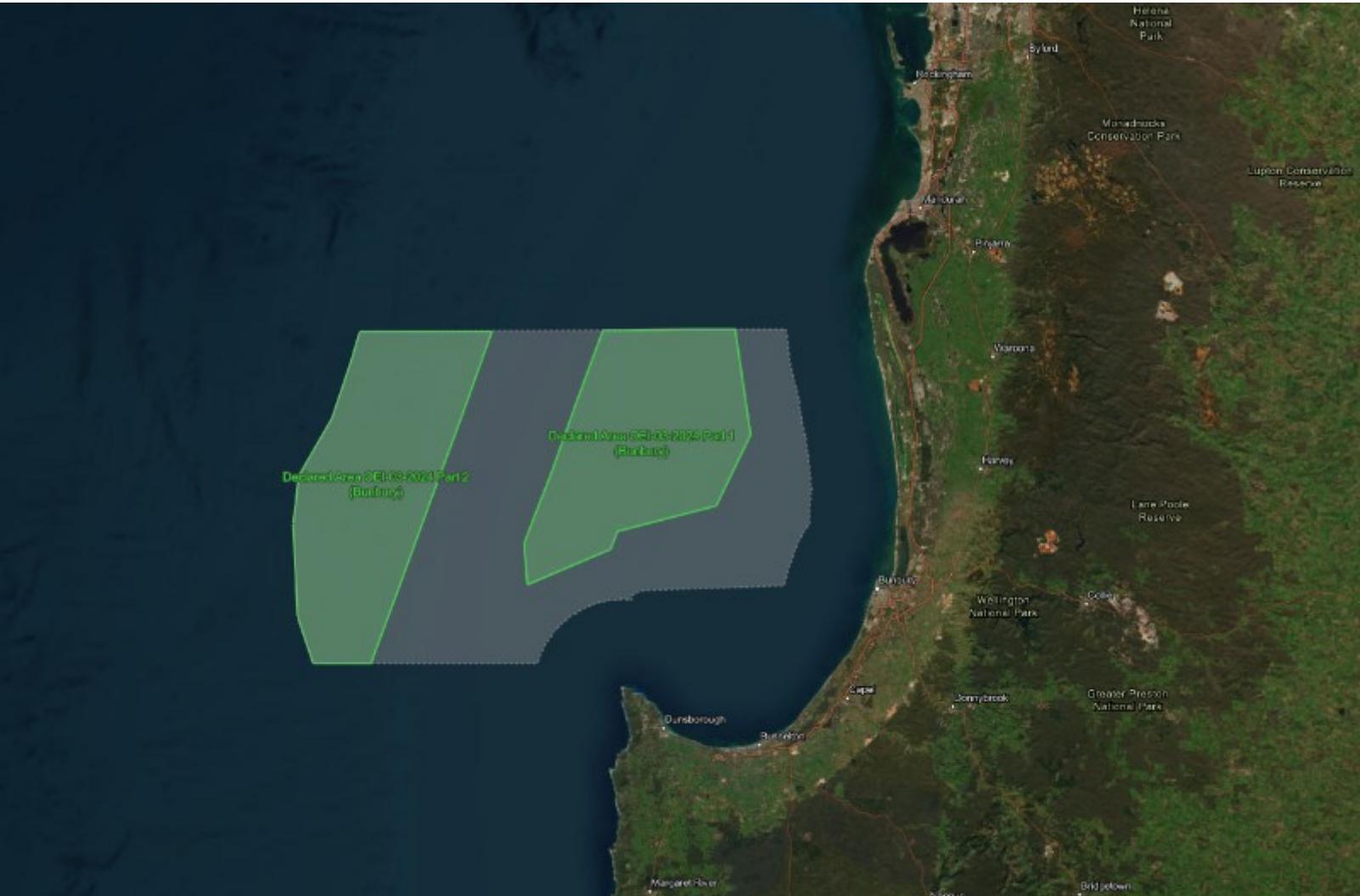
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Declared areas - NSW



Declared area - WA



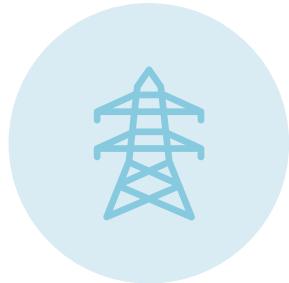
Key approvals - project proponent responsibility



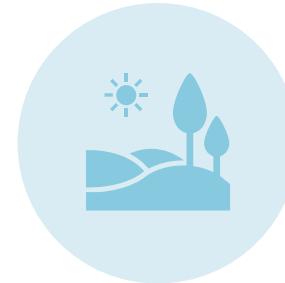
Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 licence and management plan



Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – Primary environmental approval



Grid connection agreements and route to market arrangements (States/Territories)



State/Territory planning/environmental approvals required for infrastructure and activity in coastal waters and onshore



Interaction with the EPBC Act

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) referral and decision likely to be required for large scale projects
- Management plans must address how licence holder is to comply with EPBC assessment outcomes
- The OIR monitors compliance with obligations under the OEI Act, OEI Regulations and approved management plans
- The OIR developed guidance to assist stakeholders in understanding interactions between licencing and environmental approvals process



Our role



So why do we regulate?

- To keep the workforce safe
- To protect the environment
- To assure infrastructure integrity
- To ensure accountability and funding for decommissioning and remediation
- To provide transparency and accountability
- To provide natural justice and procedural fairness
- To provide long term investment certainty
- To provide legal certainty



Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021

No. 120, 2021

Compilation No. 2

Compilation date: 1 December 2022

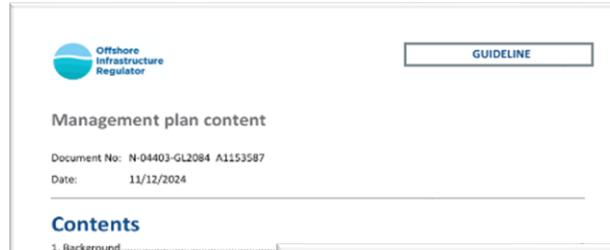
Includes amendments up to: Act No. 71, 2022

Registered: 13 December 2022

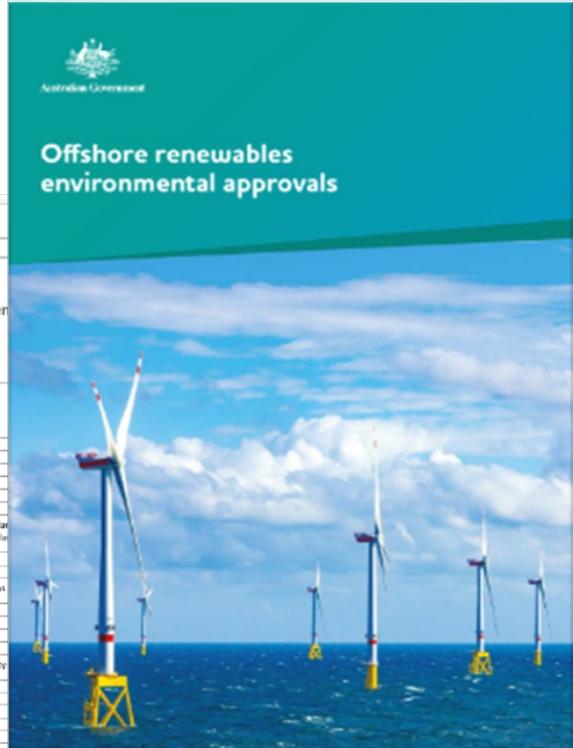


Regulatory status

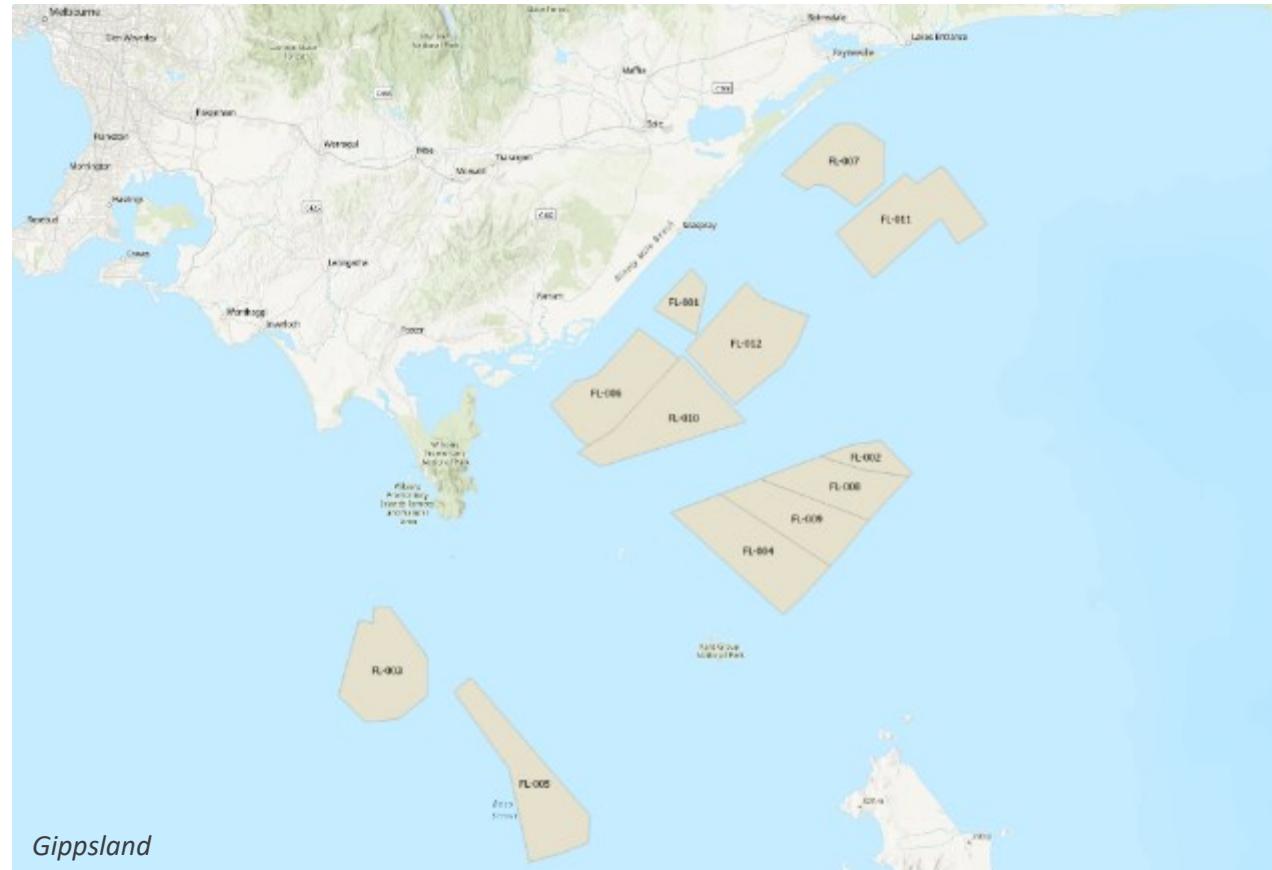
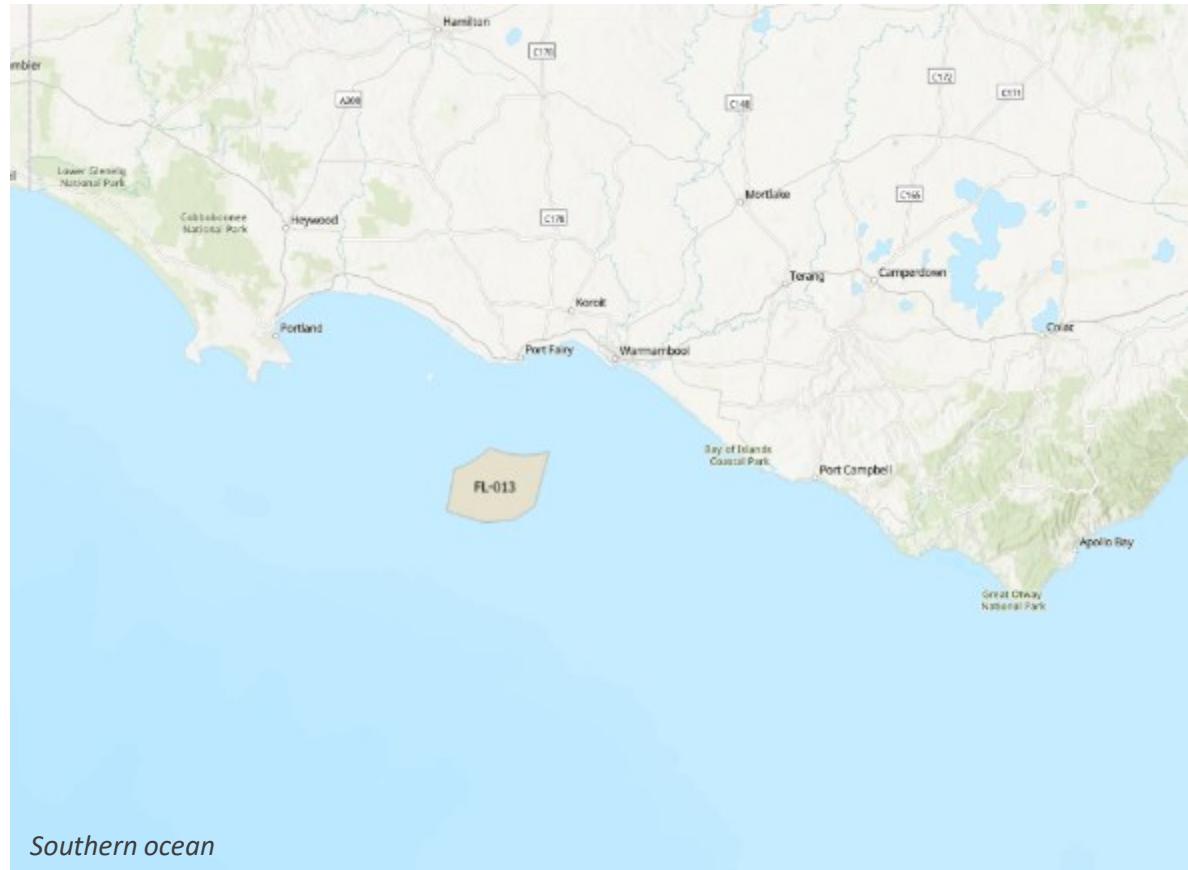
- The Offshore Electricity Amendment Regulations 2024 (amendment regulations) entered into force in December 2024.
- These regulations operationalise the OEI framework and include provisions for management plans, consultation, design notifications, work health and safety, financial security and safety and protection zones.
- OIR has released a suite of explanatory information based on the draft regulations.



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Current licences



What's happening offshore?

To search for an activity, click on an area on the map or use the search tool below. Enter keywords for a free text search, or narrow the results by using the filters.



Project name	License holder	License type	Location	Management plan status	Details
Aurora Green	Iberdrola Australia OW 2 Pty Ltd	Feasibility licence	Gippsland, VIC	Approved	View
Blue Mackerel	Blue Mackerel North Pty Ltd	Feasibility licence	Gippsland, VIC	Approved	View
Gippsland 01	Orsted Offshore Australia 1 Pty Ltd	Feasibility licence	Gippsland, VIC	Approved	View
Gippsland 02	Orsted Offshore Australia 1 Pty Ltd	Feasibility licence	Gippsland, VIC	Approved	View

Challenges & opportunities

- Coexistence with other marine users and industries
- Social licence essential (visual amenity, cumulative impacts, benefits to local communities)
- Impacts to First Nations cultural heritage
- Environmental impacts to threatened and migratory species
- Interface with grid planning and build out of transmission infrastructure
- Timing for construction and commissioning with retirement of traditional generation assets
- Competition on cost with onshore generation and storage
- Supply chain development and constraints
- Workforce transition, skills and training





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