Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

Regulating offshore renewables

University of Western Australia

10 Sept 2026

oir.gov.au



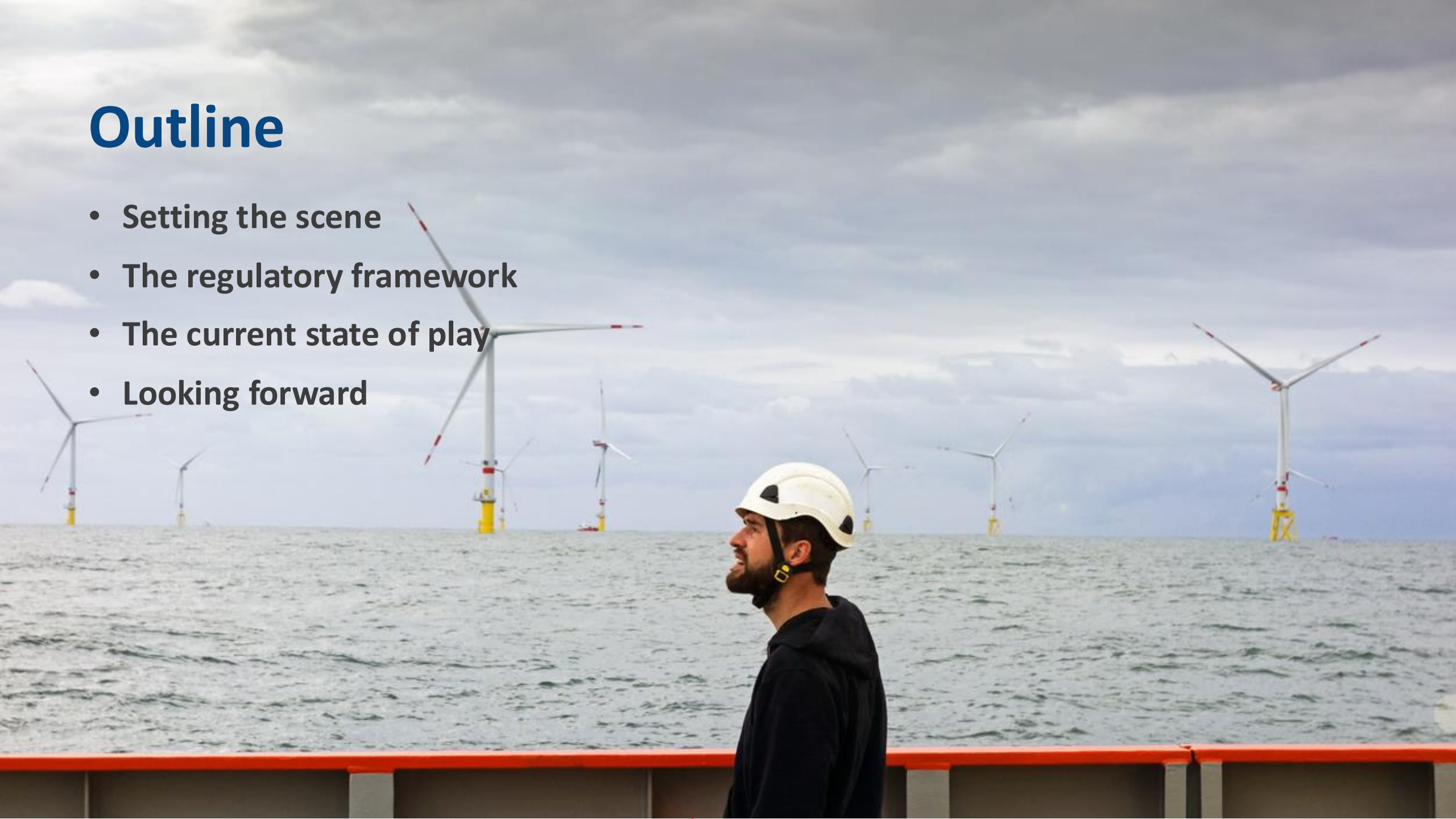
Acknowledgement of Country

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.



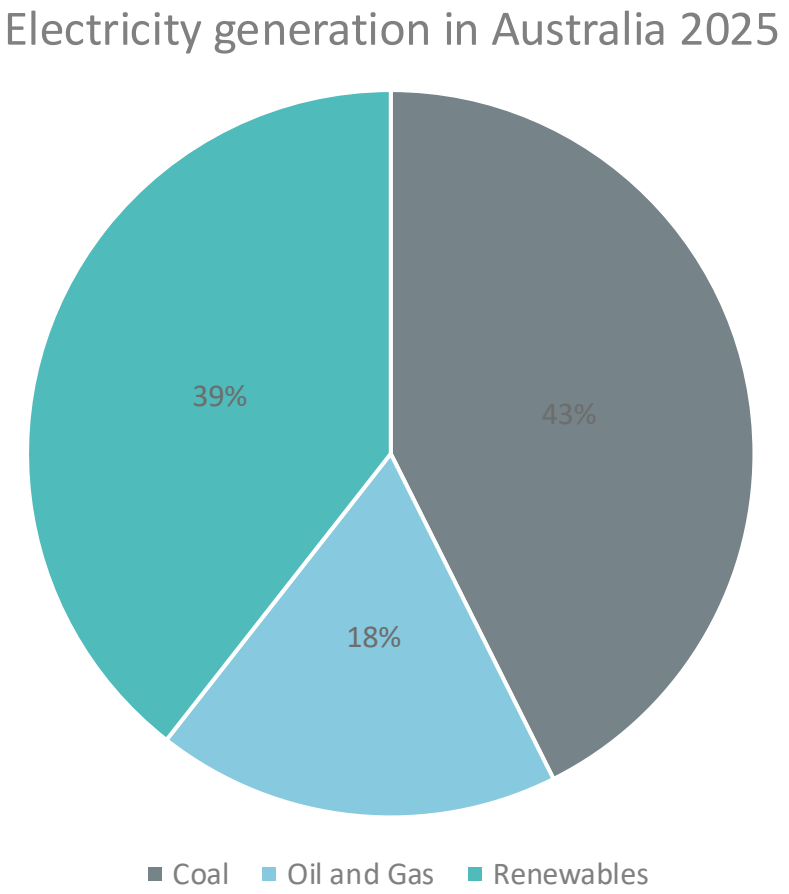
Outline

- 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



Australian Energy Statistics 2023-24

Energy consumption up

▲0.5%

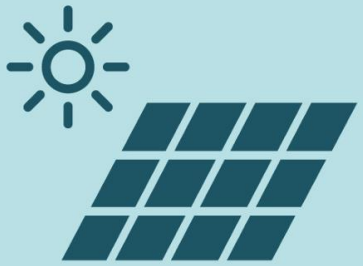
Still below 2018-19 peak

24%

Over the decade

Energy productivity improvement

(Economic output/ energy consumption)



▲13%

Growth in on-grid solar generation in 2024



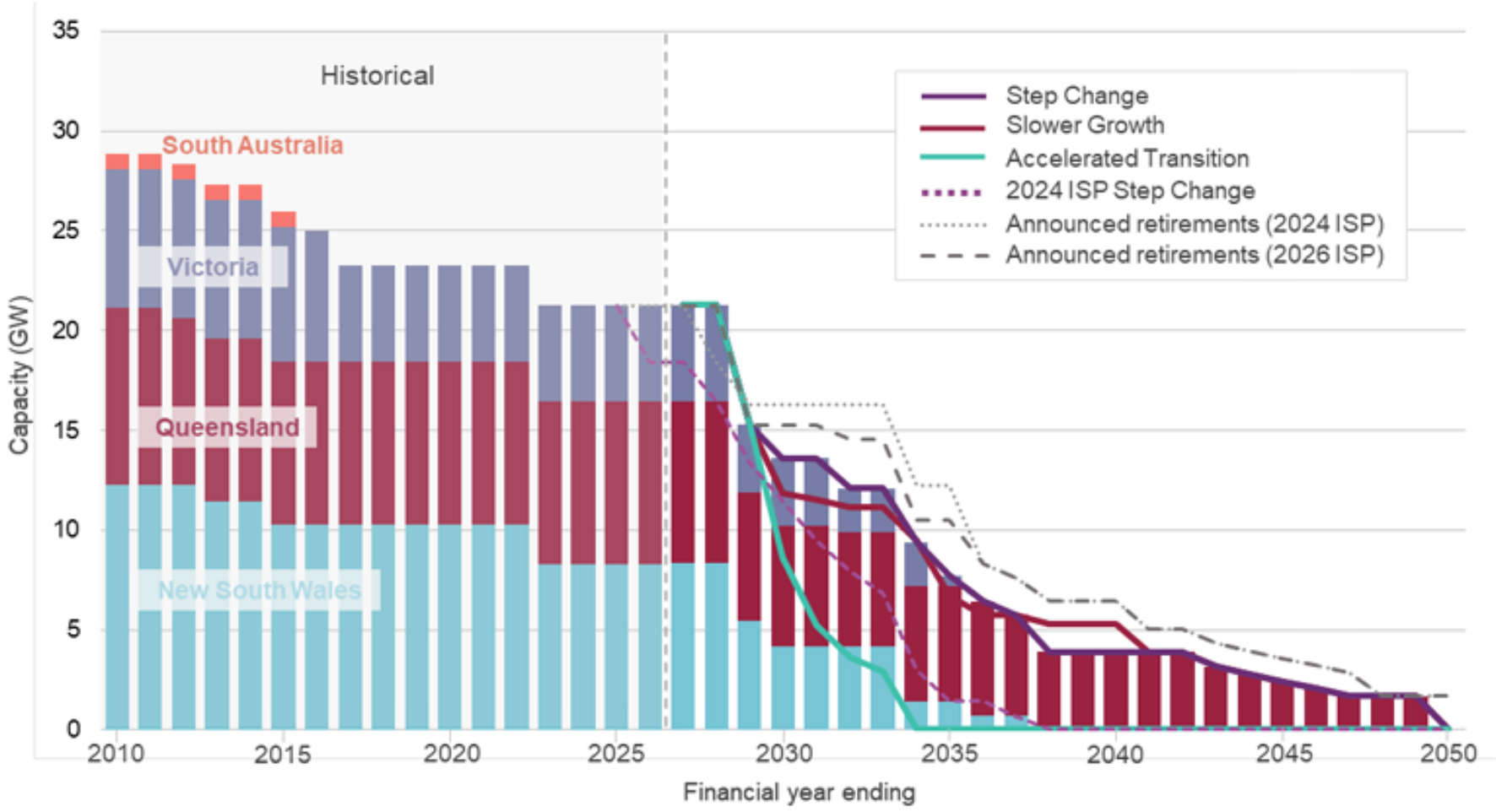
Highest on record

38%

On-grid electricity generation from renewables in 2024

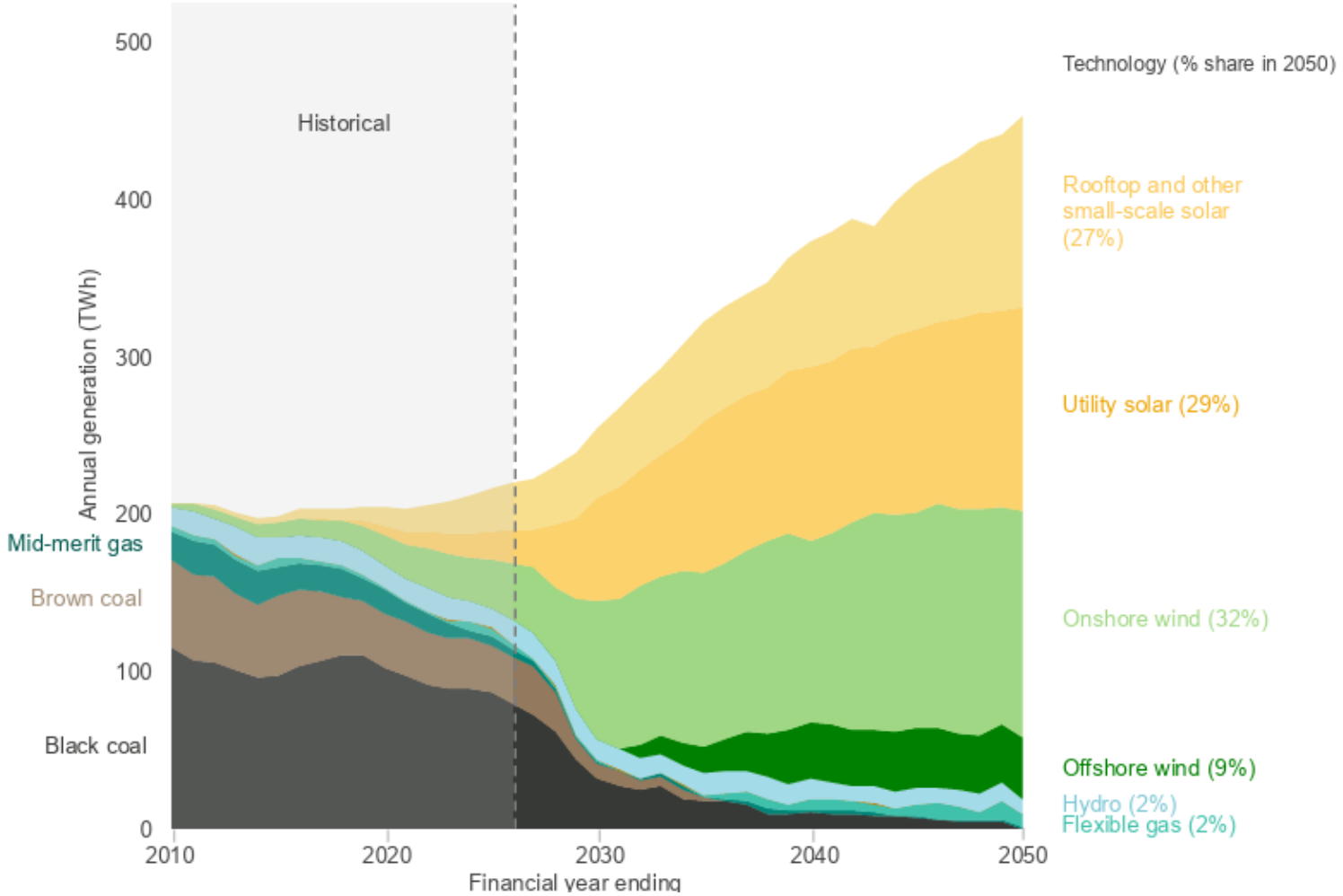
What are the drivers for renewable energy?

Figure 3 Coal capacity, NEM (GW, 2010 to 2050 financial year ending)

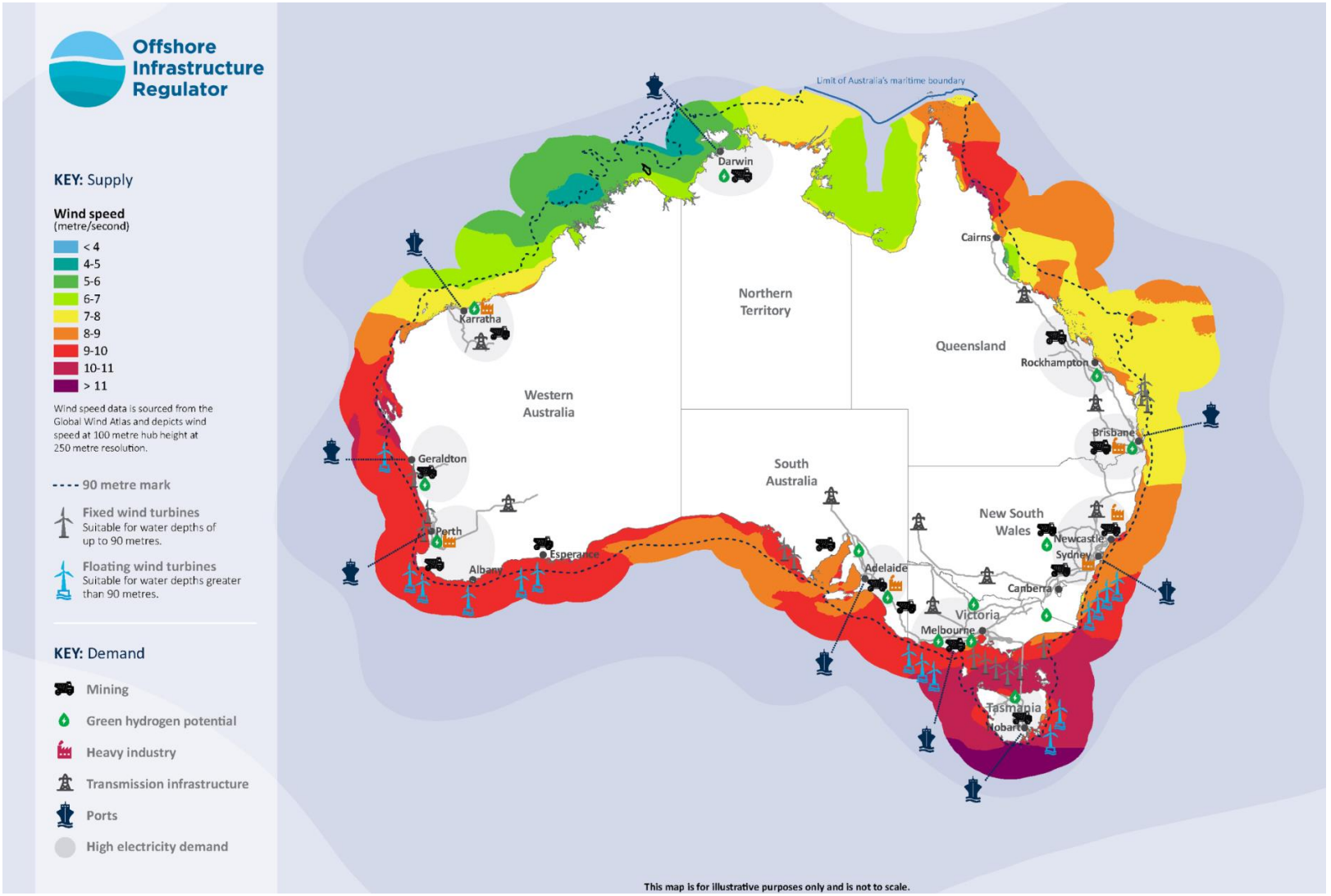


Where do we need to get?

Figure 2 **NEM annual generation** (TWh, 2010 to 2050, *Step Change*, financial year ending)



Supply and demand potential for offshore wind energy



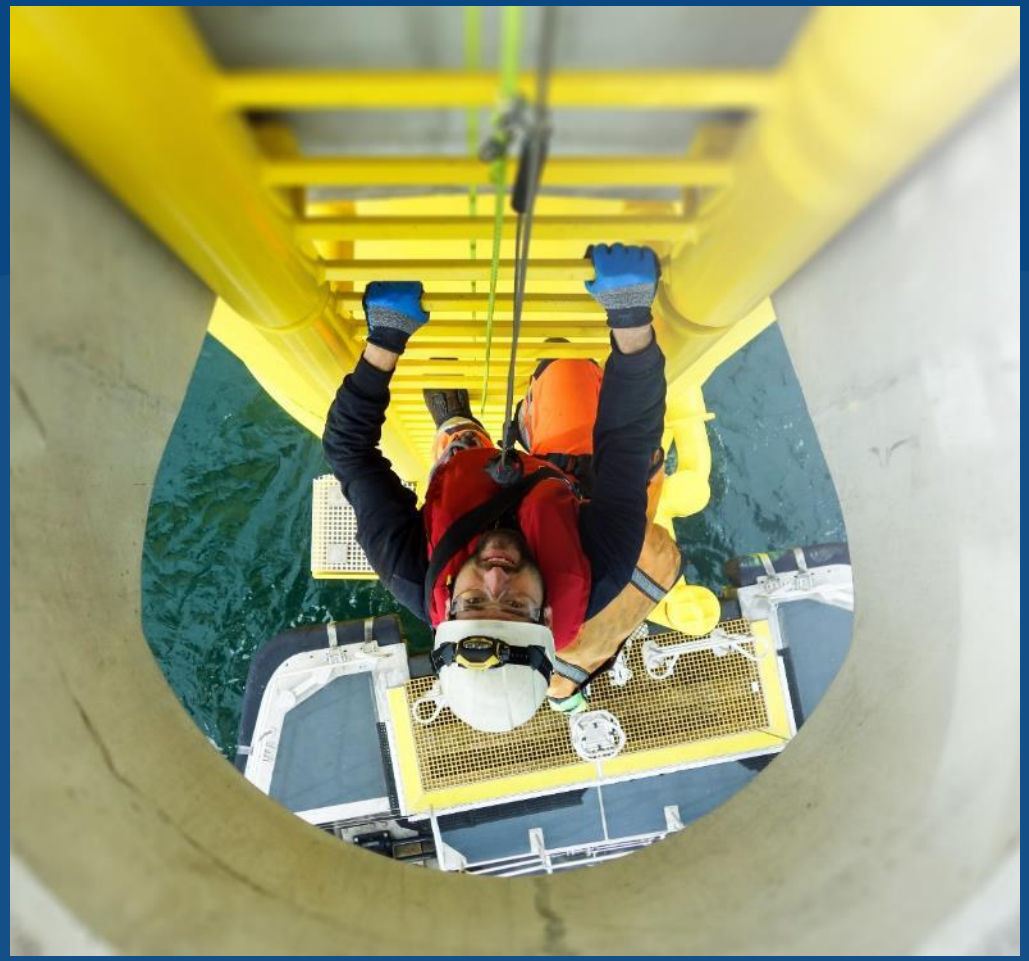
OFFICIAL



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*

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

Pre-licencing, 12 months

- **Area identification**
- **Area declaration**
- **Invitation to apply for feasibility licences within declared area**
- **Feasibility licence applications assessed**

Feasibility licence, up to 7 years

Relevant state and territory approvals may also be required

- **Feasibility licence granted**
- **Management plan for feasibility activities**
- **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act**
  Primary environmental approval requirement
- **Design notification**
  Early engagement and feedback from Regulator through design notification
  This step is mandatory for all commercial projects
- **Management plan**
  A management plan must be approved before a proponent can apply for a commercial licence

Commercial licence, up to 40 years

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

- **Commercial licence application assessed**
- **Commercial licence granted**
- **A management plan is required for activities involving construction, installation, commissioning, operation, maintenance or decommissioning**

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

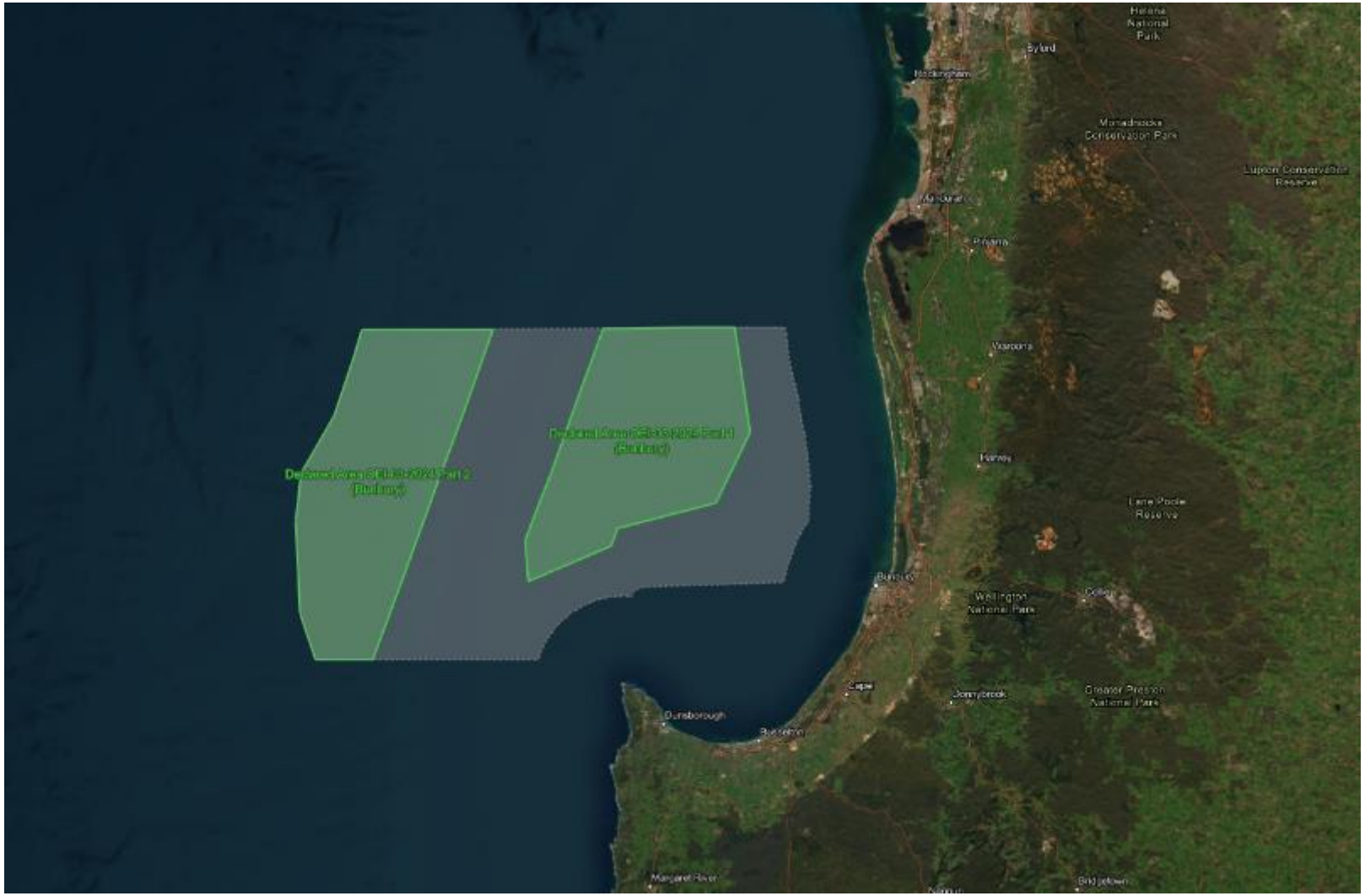
Key decision makers

Minister for Climate Change and Energy	Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water	National Environmental Protection Authority	Offshore Infrastructure Registrar	Offshore Infrastructure Regulator
• Declaration of areas • Granting of licences	• Policy and regulatory development • Identification of areas and support to Minister on declarations	• EPBC Act approvals	• Assessment of licence applications • Provision of advice to Minister • Ongoing licence administration	• Design notification • Management plan • Financial security • Safety & protection zones

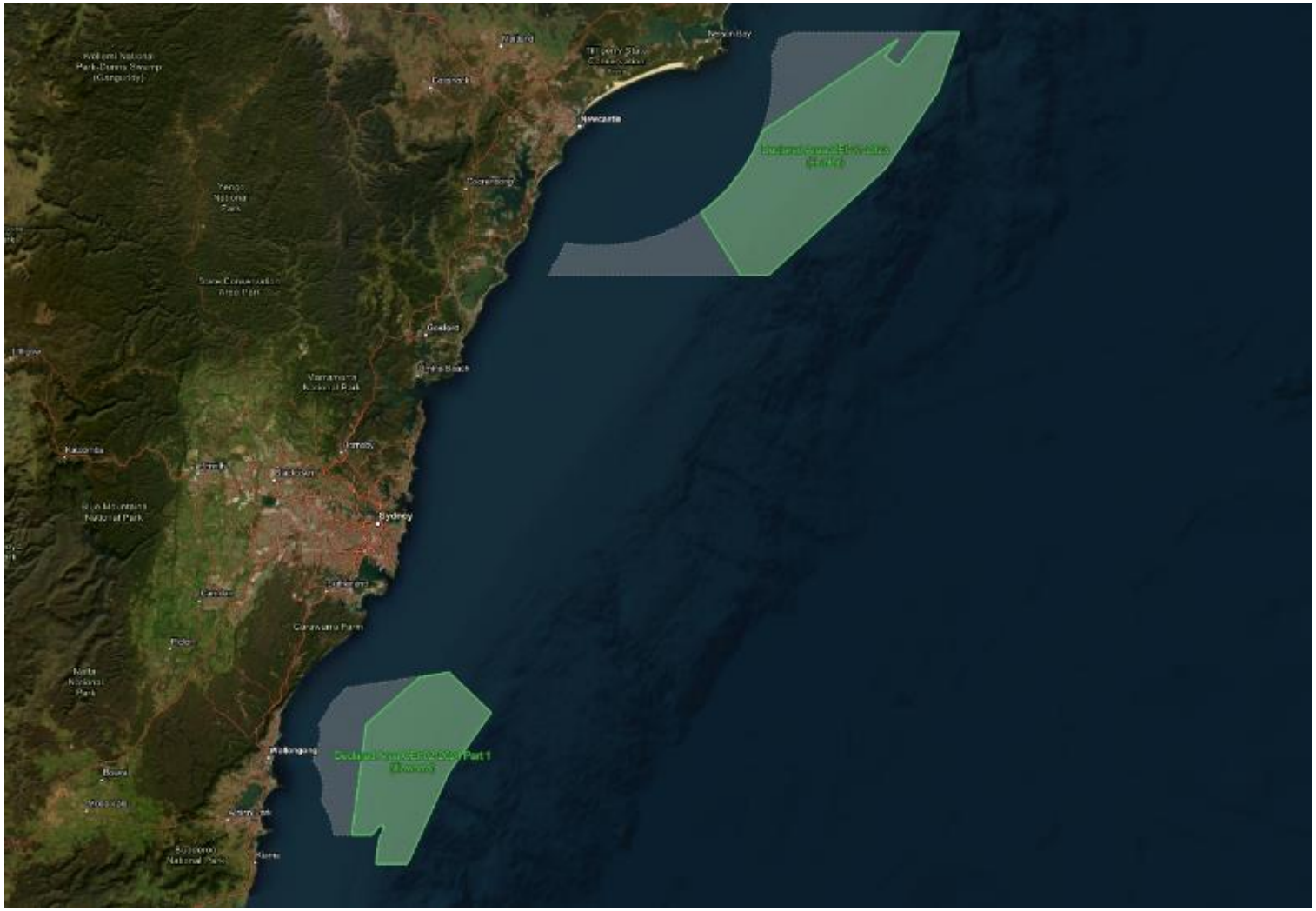
Declared areas – Victoria & Tasmania



Declared area - WA



Declared areas - NSW



Key approvals - project proponent responsibility



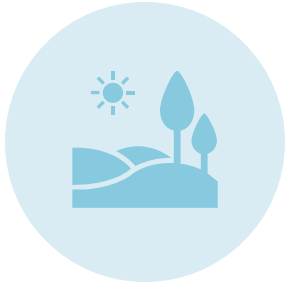
Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 licence and management plan



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


Proactive oversight
Work health and safety
Cooperate
Engagement
Compliance monitoring
Information sharing
Infrastructure integrity
Promote and advise
Financial Securities
Environmental management
Enforcement strategies
Investigations

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

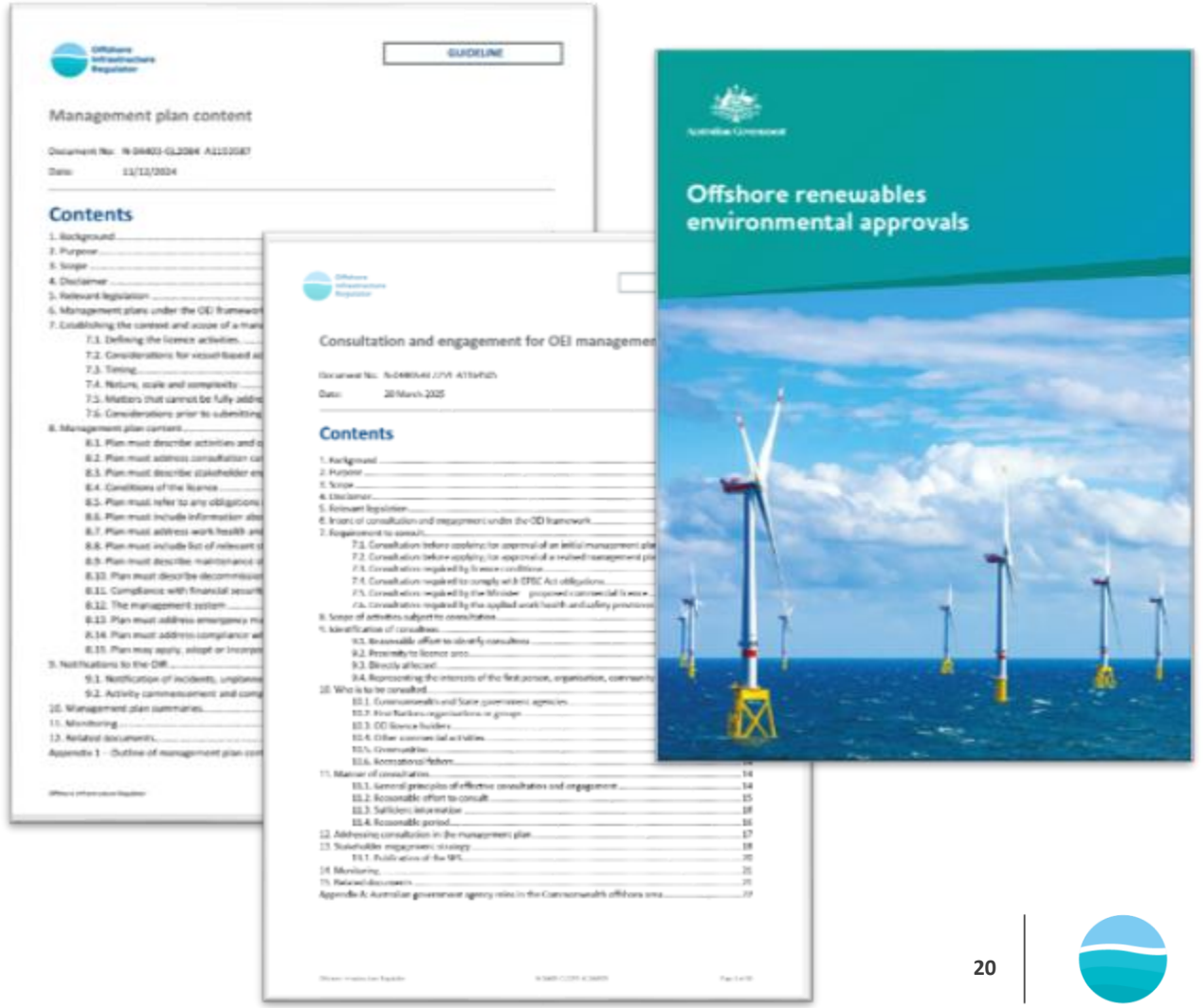
No. 120, 2021

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 fully 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.



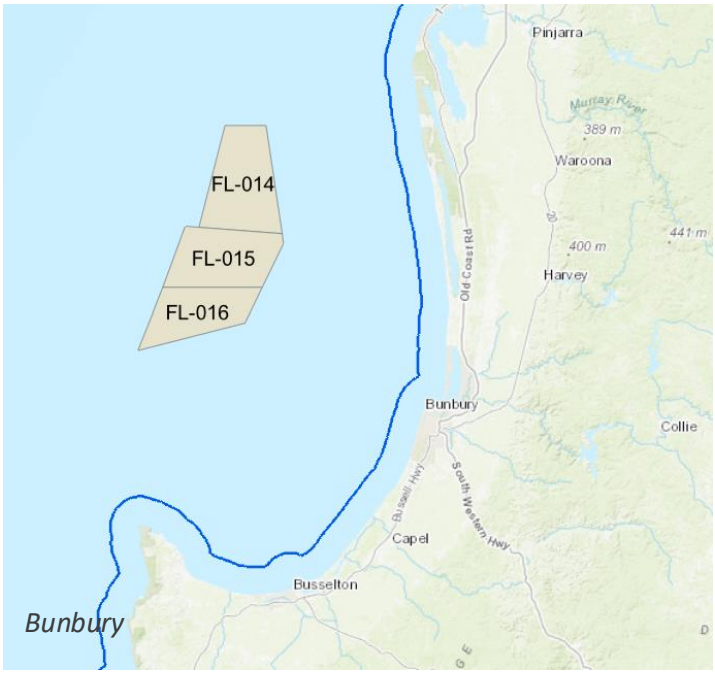
Current licences



Southern Ocean



Gippsland



Bunbury

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.



Keyword search

Licence holder...

Licence type...

Location...

State...

Apply

Project name	Licence holder	Licence 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
High Sea Wind	High Sea Wind Pty Ltd	Feasibility licence	Gippsland, VIC	Approved	View

Industry activity

- Licence holders have commenced feasibility activities.
- Early-stage activities include metocean studies and geotechnical investigations to assess the potential for harnessing wind energy.
- These activities are relatively low risk with only minor incidents having been reported.



Australia’s first offshore wind auction

- On 26 August 2026 the Victorian State Government opened Australia's first offshore wind auction
- Auction is for up to 2GW of installed capacity sufficient to power 1.5 million homes
- Will be based on price and non-price criteria
- Underpinned by the federal government Electricity Services Entry Mechanism (ESEM)
- First power anticipated in 2035



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



Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

Level 10, Alluvion, 58 Mounts Bay Rd, Perth WA 6000
GPO Box 2568, Perth WA 6001 Australia

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