



**Offshore
Infrastructure
Regulator**

Australia's regulatory framework for offshore wind

Zoe Jones, Regulatory Specialist

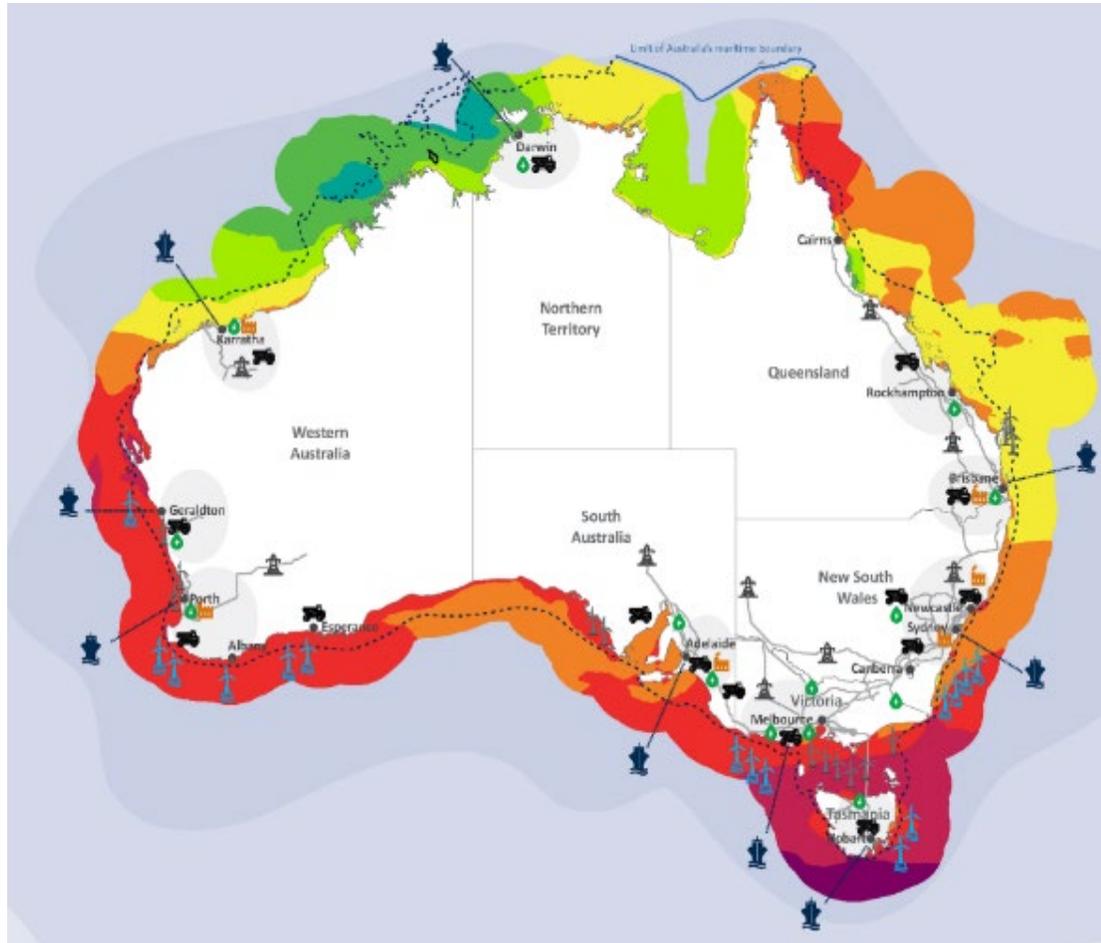
February 11, 2026

oir.gov.au

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator



Establishment of offshore wind in Australia



- Significant potential for offshore wind energy in Australia, energy demand, emissions reduction targets
- Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 and associated regulations
- OEI Act regulates where and how offshore electricity infrastructure projects may operate
- Commonwealth offshore area (3-200NM)
- OEI does not apply onshore or in coastal waters.



Australian government roles under OEI framework

Minister for Climate Change and Energy

- Declaration of areas
- Granting of licences

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

- Policy and strategy for industry growth
- Regulatory development
- Support to Minister on area identification
- EPBC environmental assessments

Offshore Infrastructure Registrar

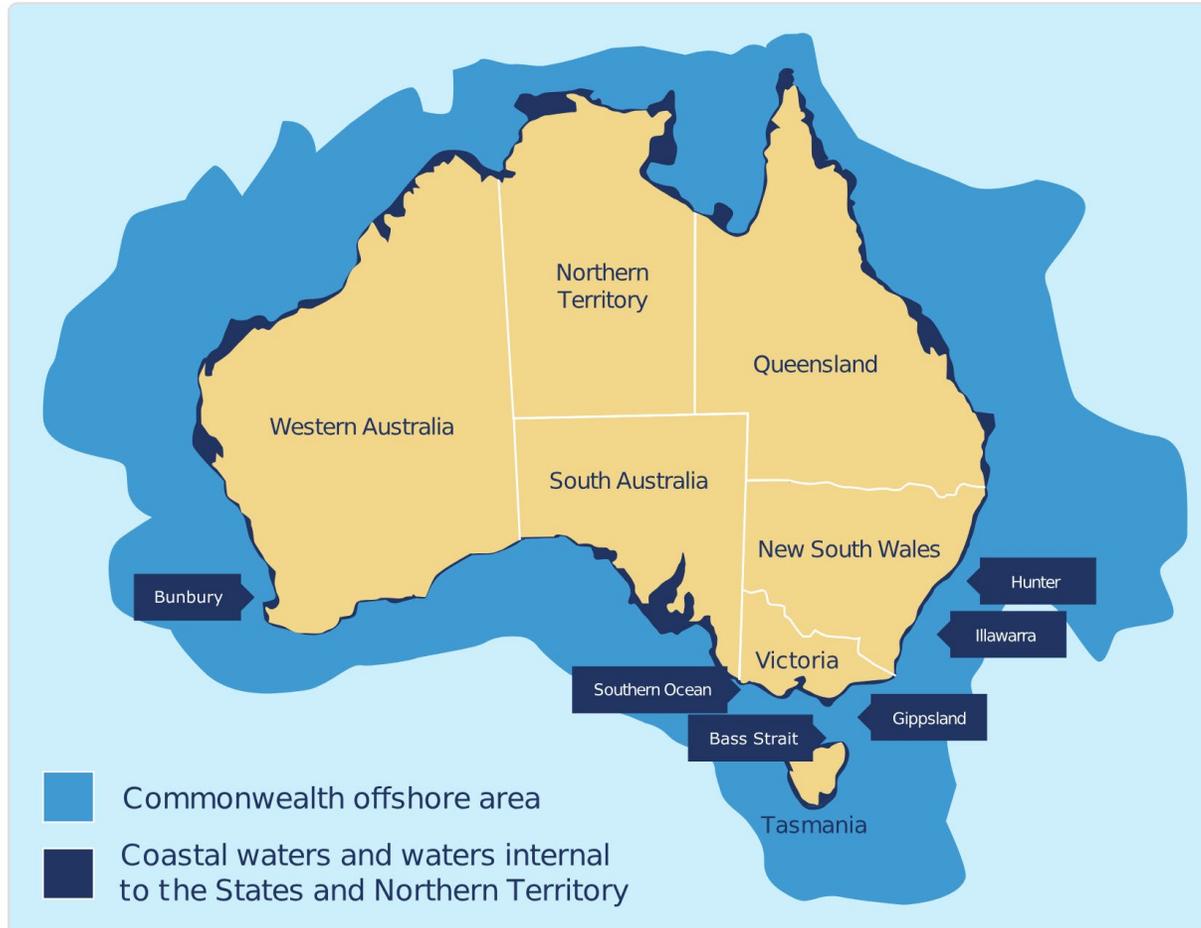
- Assessment of licence applications
- Provision of advice to Minister
- Ongoing licence administration

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

- Safety, environment and infrastructure integrity
- Management plans and other authorisations
- Advice and engagement
- Compliance monitoring - influence, oversee, enforce



Key elements of OEI framework – declaration and licencing



Area Declaration

- Gippsland, Vic
- Southern Ocean, Vic
- Indian Ocean / Bunbury, WA
- Bass Strait, Tas
- Hunter, NSW
- Illawarra, NSW



Licencing

- Feasibility (13 licences to date)
- Commercial
- Transmission & infrastructure
- Research & demonstration



Key element – environmental approvals



EPBC approvals

- EPBC Act provides for the primary environmental approval process for offshore wind projects

Environmental management under OEI Act

- There is no secondary environmental impact assessment in the OEI framework
- OEI Regulations require management plan to set out the measures that will ensure compliance with EPBC obligations over the life of the project
- The OIR monitors compliance with those measures



Key elements of OEI framework – authorisations from OIR



Design notification

- Early engagement process for all commercial and transmission projects
- Design phase must consider safety, integrity, co-existence, environment decommissioning



Safety & Protection zones

- Safety zones prevent unauthorised access
- Protection zones prohibit or restrict specific activities
- Principle of co-existence with other marine users



WHS authorisations

- OEI Act applies the Cth WHS Act and Regulations, with minor modifications
- Approvals align with harmonised model WHS laws and other corresponding WHS regulators



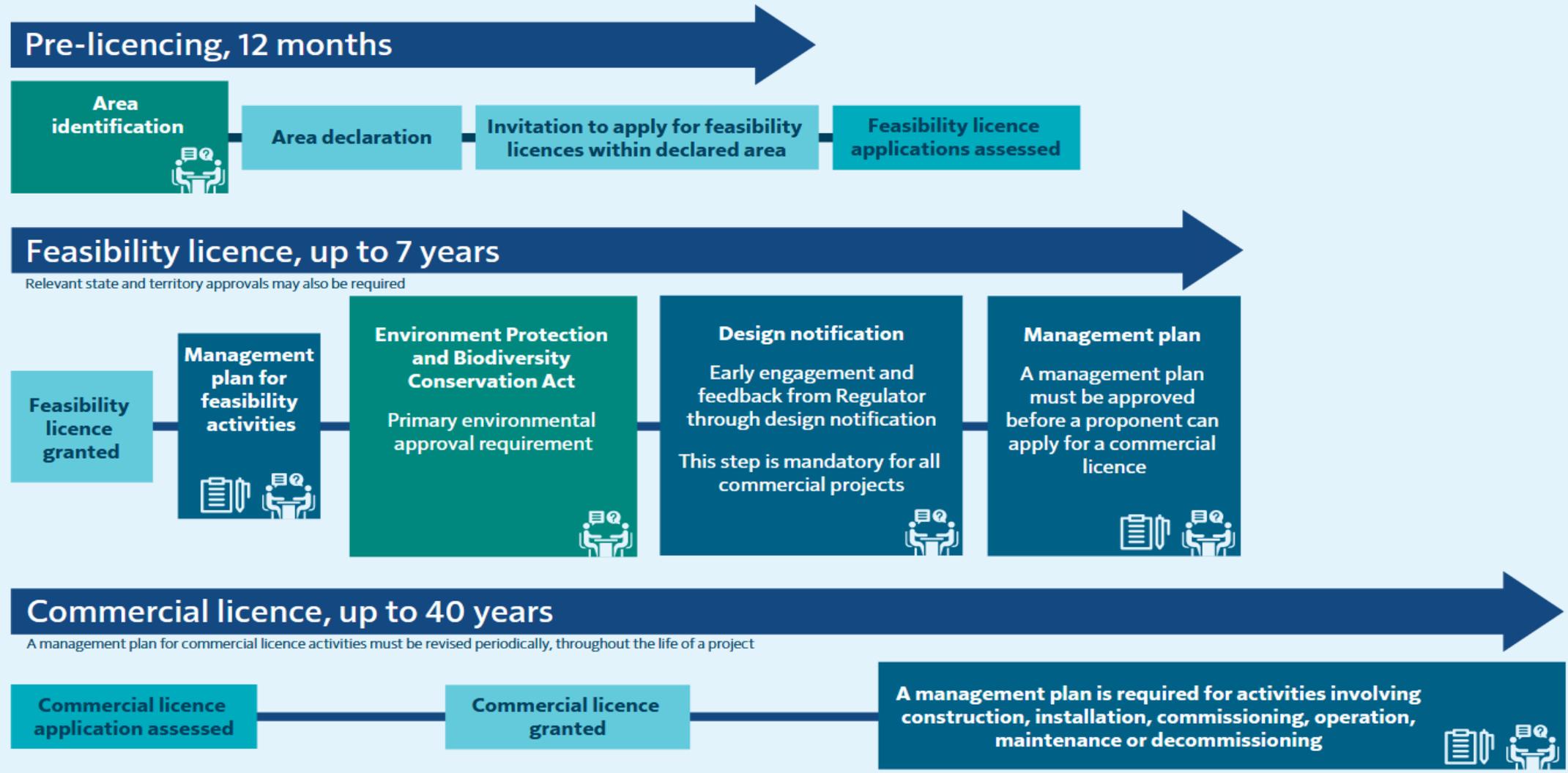
Management plan

- Required before installation of any infrastructure
- One plan maintained for life of licence
- Integrated risk management document
 - Project description
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Licence conditions
 - EPBC obligations
 - Work Health & Safety
 - Infrastructure integrity
 - Decommissioning
 - Financial Security
 - Emergency response
 - Management systems for continuous improvement
- Compliance with all obligations



Regulatory roadmap

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



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

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
- Prioritising, funding and designing research to support decision-making



Research strategy

- A comprehensive knowledge base will support efficient regulatory decision-making
- OIR and NOPSEMA have developed a joint research strategy
- While OIR/NOPSEMA do not do, or commission, research the Regulator is in a unique position to identify key research gaps and potential overlap
- The strategy aims to communicate the Regulator's key priorities and promote a collaborative approach to prioritising, funding and designing research
- Early engagement with regulators, the industry and existing research forums will enable improved visibility and coordination of research effort for offshore wind





Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

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

oir.gov.au