



HON STEPHEN JONES MP
MEMBER FOR WHITLAM

ALISON BYRNES MP
MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

FIONA PHILLIPS MP
MEMBER FOR GILMORE

SUBMISSION

**SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE
OFFSHORE WIND INDUSTRY
CONSULTATION PROCESS**

29 AUGUST 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

29 August 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Illawarra region in New South Wales was the fourth declared zone for an offshore wind industry in Australia. It has also been declared by the previous NSW Government as a Renewable Energy Zone.

Being a part of the clean energy transformation presents great opportunities for the Illawarra region. This has been recognised by all levels of government, of all sides, over many years with policy decisions that reflect this.

Offshore wind is a brand-new industry for our country and our region, and we understand that change can be confronting and uneasy. This is not something that will happen overnight and there are several stages of community consultation to still occur.

Given that this is a new industry it was not possible for every question to have an answer so early in the process. Similarly the legislated process for the declaration of a zone also requires many of the studies that local residents expressed concerns about to happen after the declaration rather than before it.

It is important to note that upon the declaration of a zone, feasibility licences are called for. Obtaining a feasibility licence allows the opportunity for proponents to commence the required environmental studies that are required through the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021, which are regulated by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

Unfortunately we have witnessed the community conversation sour over recent months due to a wave of politically motivated mis and disinformation aimed at eroding community trust in the process and at times in the institutions of decision making within our community, making it difficult for the community to receive credible and verified facts to reach an informed decision.

Local residents, businesses and environmentalists have been deterred from actively engaging in the process as discussion, at times, rapidly turned into denigration of individuals. Participants opted out of the discussion for fear of harassment and intimidation, which has sadly occurred both online and outside in the community.

The public discussion of an offshore wind industry in the region began well before the close of submissions for the proposed zone in November 2023. It was an option first proposed by the then NSW Liberal-National Government during its consultation on the declaration of the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone which received bipartisan support.

Between 27 July 2022 and 15 November 2023, offshore wind appeared on the front page of our local daily newspaper the Illawarra Mercury **over fifteen times**.

There were **five joint media releases** in our capacity as local representatives between 5 August 2022 and 15 November 2023, and a newsletter delivered to over 100,000 residents notifying them of the Illawarra's selection as a proposed zone within 100 days of the change of government.

It is also important to note that this process was established by the previous Liberal National Government and the process and guidelines around the consultation were also established by the previous Liberal National Government.

During the first stage of official consultation for an Illawarra offshore wind energy zone, a 94-day public consultation process occurred from 14 August to 15 November 2023. During these 94 days, we spoke with thousands of constituents, community and conservation groups across our electorates.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) conducted six consultation sessions, with over 150,000 households receiving personal notification, which were attended by more than 1,200 residents.

As a result of the feedback from the community who still had unanswered questions, an additional two information sessions were hosted by the Member for Cunningham and were well attended by over 750 people in person and online. While mainly attended by people in the Cunningham electorate, individuals and groups from other parts of the Illawarra attended, participated and viewed the sessions online.

Following these additional sessions and community feedback at the meeting, a one-month extension was also granted for submissions by the local community to the Department.

The Government received more than 14,200 submissions on this proposed zone, at least 11,000 submissions more than any other proposed zone in Australia. This would suggest the community in the Illawarra has been highly engaged and aware of the project and process.

The proposed offshore wind zone was the subject of a petition against the proposal to the Federal Parliament tabled on 13 November 2023, which received 11,219 signatures. It was also the subject of a similar petition to the NSW Parliament, sponsored by the NSW Member for Kiama, Gareth Ward MP, tabled on 26 May 2024 and receiving 2418 signatures from NSW residents.

After this engagement with the community, the Minister has listened to our community's concerns and has made significant changes to the area where proponents can apply to build projects, including shrinking the total area by one-third, and shifting the zone 20km off the coast to accommodate fishing and maritime activities as well as minimise any visual impact.

This submission aims to outline the extensive feedback received from community members, stakeholders, and various organisations throughout a lengthy initial consultation through formal channels and constituent engagement.

It addresses the factors that influenced the offshore wind debate and emphasises the need for a balanced approach to ensure affordable power, job creation, and environmental protection can occur in the Illawarra.

TIMELINE

The journey towards the establishment of the offshore wind zone has involved several critical milestones under several governments:

Federal Liberal National Government:

- **2 September 2021** – Introduced the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Bill 2021 to facilitate and regulate the development of electricity infrastructure in Commonwealth waters. The bill:
 - Prohibits offshore renewable energy infrastructure and offshore electricity transmission infrastructure in the Commonwealth offshore area without a licence;
 - Provides for the minister to declare specified areas suitable for offshore infrastructure activities and to grant licences allowing proponents to undertake offshore infrastructure activities in specified areas;
 - Provides for safety and protection zones to protect offshore electricity infrastructure;
 - Establishes the Offshore Infrastructure Registrar to administer the licensing scheme, including maintaining a register of licences and managing the licence application process;
 - Identifies the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority as the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator with work health and safety, environmental management, infrastructure integrity and regulatory functions;
 - Provides for directions, compliance and enforcement powers;
 - and provides for the protection of worker safety through modified application of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Albanese Labor Government:

- **5 August 2022** – Announcement of the proposed offshore wind zone.

NSW Liberal National Government:

- **23 February 2023** – Offshore wind included as part of the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone declared by the Perrottet Government in NSW following a period of public consultation

Albanese Labor Government:

- **14 August 2023** – Consultations open on the proposed zone.
- **15 November 2023** – Consultations close.
- **15 June 2024** – Final zone announced, feasibility licenses open.

At each step of this process, we undertook to keep the community informed and up to date as we understand that change can be difficult.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The declared offshore wind zone has garnered significant attention from local media for more than two years.

As the elected representatives for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, we began the conversation in the community at the very first opportunity, and have continued to inform our electorates at every step of the way.

There were numerous communications, both political and commercial, regarding the proposal, including but not limited to:

- Between 27 July 2022 and 15 November 2023, offshore wind appeared on the front page of the Illawarra Mercury **fifteen times** (Attachment A).
- A newsletter sent to over **100,000 households** that included the announcement of a proposed zone in the Illawarra in **September 2022** (Attachment B).
- There were **5 joint media releases** between 5 August 2022 and 15 November 2023. These media engagements have played a vital role in informing the community and generating discussions on the project (Attachment C).

Information on this emerging industry was consistently available in the public sphere for more than two years. While we strive to ensure that the public is well-informed, we can only provide the information; it is ultimately up to individuals to engage with it.

SUBMISSIONS

The consultation process has seen an impressive level of community engagement resulting in over 14,000 submissions.

The submission process was widely discussed in the community with some offering financial and other inducements to participate while others outlined ways where people could get around consultation systems to make multiple submissions. (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

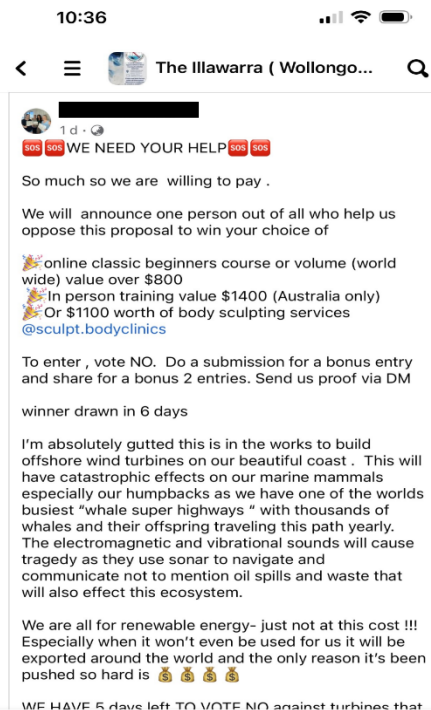


Figure 1.1

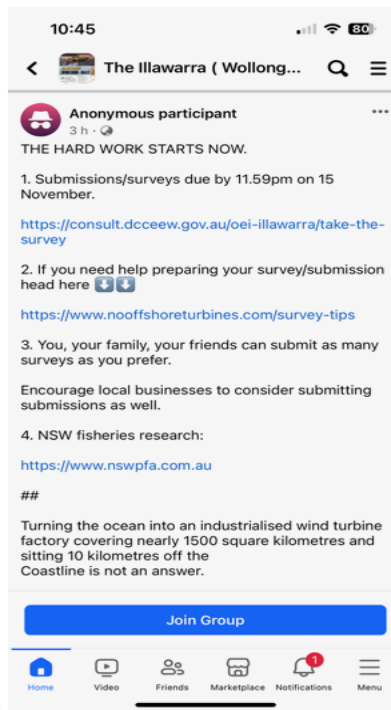


Figure 1.2

During the analysis of submissions it was noted that Converlens, the platform used for making submissions, did not validate email addresses and does not provide functionality to prevent multiple submissions from the same person.

Of the total submissions received, at least 1,432 (around 10 per cent) were identified as duplicate emails.

At the end of the consultation period, DCCEEW sent a ‘close of submissions’ response email to every address that made a submission, and received an additional 440 bounce backs, which could indicate the use of invalid or temporary email addresses used for the purposes of making a submission only.

Whilst the Government continued to have constructive conversations with local communities in good faith, after the statistics were released following stage one, a prominent figure of the Coalition Against Offshore Wind (CAOW) appeared on Win News Illawarra on 10 July 2024, blaming the government for having a system without multi factor authentication to stop multiple submissions, stating:

“Who set up the consultation period where you can actually submit with a fake email address, isn't there some sort of like fact multifactor authentication of people who do submit?”

The same actor encouraged community members at a public meeting on 28 September 2023 to cheat the system and submit multiple submissions from false or identical email addresses (Attachment D).

This lack of authentication in the submission process is a shortcoming of the system that needs to be addressed. The result of a system that does not include such a minimum level of authenticity assessment makes it difficult to distinguish genuine community concern from intentional and politically motivated disruption, particularly

at a time when technology can be weaponised through artificial intelligence to support actors seeking to manipulate processes of government.

Similar tactics were invoked, and incentives offered when a petition against offshore wind was submitted to the House Committee on Petitions - Petition EN5444. This petition garnered 11,219 signatures, and was signed by multiple key figures of the CAOW on multiple occasions and had encouraged other opponents to do so.

Unfortunately, the commonwealth petitions system had formerly operated on an understanding of good will and did not have any mechanisms in place to prevent multiple signatories from individuals.

The Chair of the Committee, Susan Templeman MP stated in the Parliament on Monday 13 November 2023 following these revelations that *"signing a petition multiple times compromises the integrity of the petition system by both increasing the number of signatories and misrepresenting the level of public support for a petition."*

The Chair said as a result of the situation the committee had made changes to the "signatory process" to ensure all communities have access to a fair and truly representative petitions system.

This artificially exaggerated participation statistics are now presented as genuine feedback by a small minority of disruptors, but fortunately much of these tactics were discovered through a petition to the New South Wales Parliament. The NSW system required a more stringent verification process for signatories, and as a result did not meet the requirements for tabling in the NSW Parliament (Attachment E).

It is noted that a similar petition to the NSW Parliament with an authentication process and a similar level of advertising locally did not produce the same result with around 2,400 signatures on an electronic petition.

We also draw to the Committee's attention that public submissions were made by the University of Wollongong, Business Illawarra, Regional Development Australia Illawarra, Electrify 2515, South Coast Labor Council, NSW Port Authority, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Good for the Gong, and BlueScope Steel to name just a few.

These organisations represent the views of hundreds if not thousands of students, academics, businesses, workers, environmentalists and general members of our community. However, these only count as a single submission in the submission count.

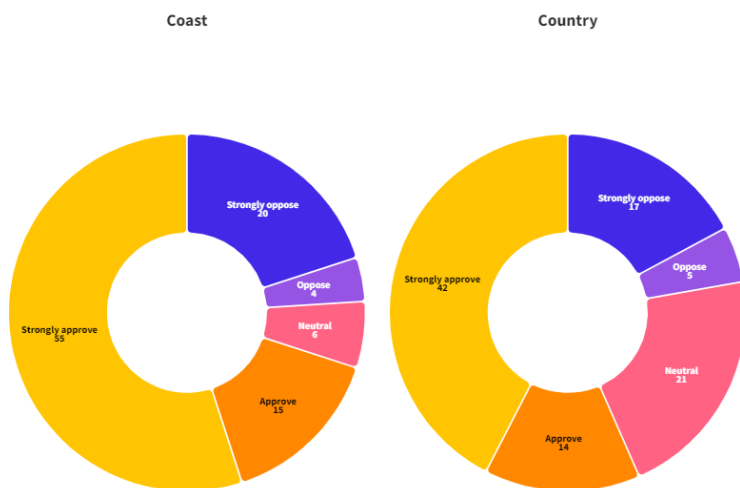
This cohort of supporters were often calling our offices, approaching us at street stalls and speaking with family and friends about the proposal, but didn't feel the need to submit an individual submission as their views were expressed by their organisations. As it has been made clear, the process was not a referendum on offshore wind, although the results are being used by a small minority as though it was.

A recent survey conducted by ACM, the masthead of our local newspaper the Illawarra Mercury, in July 2024 reveals varying levels of support for offshore wind in the NSW and ACT regions.

Respondents selecting the Illawarra Mercury, the Newcastle Herald, Warrnambool Standard, Burnie Advocate, and Launceston Examiner as their local ACM paper showed **55% strong approval** and 70% overall approval for offshore wind in their community (figure 1.3).

This contrasts with **42% strong approval** and 56% overall approval for wind farms from inland communities, suggesting stronger support in coastal regions.

Sentiment towards offshore wind infrastructure



Q. Thinking about offshore wind infrastructure in your community, please indicate your approval or disapproval.

Figure 1.3

From a hyper regional perspective in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, the number of submissions could also be indicative of a silent majority who understand the need for alternative power generation and action on climate change, but were not motivated to make an official submission. Had this group not supported the government’s proposed approach they would have engaged in the submissions process.

When considering the sentiment of the community, if only 2.79 per cent of our joint constituencies strongly oppose this project, we have a wide range of views left to consider.

CONSULTATION

The first consultation period was extensive, involving various steps to ensure comprehensive community engagement.

Over the course of 94 days and 14,211 submissions, we learned what is important to communities, groups and businesses across the Illawarra.

Importantly the consultation process led to changes in the final design of the area declared.

It is impossible to argue that the feedback received was ignored, even if some were disappointed that it didn't produce the result they wanted.

Due to the feedback we received from our communities during the consultation period, we sought and the Minister allowed an extension of time to allow more of the community to participate in the discussion and provide a submission.

We as local representatives advertised the consultation sessions across our electorates, and where possible attended the Department led community consultation sessions to answer any questions the community had of the government.

The Member for Cunningham hosted an additional two community panels that were attended by more than 750 residents from across the Illawarra in a bid to provide accurate and unbiased information directly to attendees.

As a direct result of the feedback received at the end of the extension, Minister Bowen announced a zone that is approximately one third smaller, at least 20 km from the coast to reduce impacts of offshore wind turbines on the views along the coastline of the Illawarra and moved the area away from the coast to allow space for the safe management of shipping to and from Port Kembla.

The proposed area already protected environmental areas including marine parks, a Biologically Important Area for the Little Penguin, the Shelf Rocky Reef Key Ecological Feature and Southern Right Whale migration and reproduction area, and the declared zone maintains these protections.

Based on consultation with those in the local fishing industry who were willing to participate, the zone allows great boating and fishing spots along the Illawarra coastline to remain and sets out clear requirements for offshore wind developers to consult with fishers and avoid, mitigate and offset any impacts on fishing.

Speaking with First Nations Australians in the area was a priority of the declaration process. First Nations organisations and members of the community noted the need for evidence-based research on any possible impacts to cultural sites and the marine environment, to whale migration, and to employment and economic benefits to the community.

This zone respects First Nations Australians and ensures the Sea Country that the Dharawal people have protected for generations is protected into the future.

Whilst we believe we held the community to the highest standard during the first consultation period, we understand there is always room for improvement, and we can always do better.

The Albanese Government commissioned the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's Community Engagement Review and accepted in principle all recommendations in February of this year.

The review aimed to provide advice on more effective ways to engage landowners and communities directly affected by the renewable energy transformation, and to drive long-term economic and social benefits for these areas.

We are committed to an equitable energy transition that provides genuine benefits to those involved. The Albanese Government has accepted in principle all nine recommendations made by Commissioner Mr Andrew Dyer. These include:

- Reducing unnecessary community engagement (where infrastructure will not ultimately be located) by improving the way project sites are selected
- Increasing early local collaboration
- Revising planning and approval processes to be more transparent and streamlined when it comes to community feedback
- Motivating developers to ensure best practice engagement
- Improving complaints handling
- Keeping communities better informed on energy transition goals, benefits and needs; and
- Equitably sharing the benefits of the transformation.

To implement these recommendations, our government's federal budget for this year included a commitment of **\$20 million** to improve consultation processes, including the establishment of an accreditation scheme for renewable energy developers.

POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

Unfortunately and to the detriment to our community, much of this important conversation has been derailed by deliberate political tactics by a federal Liberal National opposition.

The Coalition have been complicit in reigniting the climate wars and stoking the fire of mis and disinformation on an industry they legislated and a community consultation guide that they designed despite this process being the process they adopted and legislated.

Then-Minister for Energy Angus Taylor introduced the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Bill 2021 to the parliament, saying:

“Supporting the development of large projects and a new offshore industry represents an exciting new opportunity for Australia. I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this bill to enable the development of a new industry that will create jobs, strengthen our economy, and facilitate a more affordable and secure energy system.”

The current federal Shadow Minister for Energy, Ted O'Brien has visited the region on more than three occasions, spreading harmful misinformation and creating unfounded panic.

The Shadow Minister's opposition is newfound, considering after the 2022 election he was steadfast in his support for offshore wind, saying:

“Offshore energy infrastructure has the potential to create significant investment and job creation opportunities, as well as to contribute to Australia's future energy security. That is why, when in government, the Coalition delivered on a 2019 election commitment and passed legislation to enable the development of offshore electricity infrastructure.”

The Liberal candidate in Gilmore is opposing offshore wind despite his previous support for renewable energy, being a Minister in the New South Wales Government that declared the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) and campaigned for the Liberal Party in 2022 when offshore wind was a part of its energy policy.

Andrew Constance was a strong supporter of renewable energy in his tenure as NSW Minister and Cabinet Member, even explicitly warning against ‘vocal minorities’ undermining the transition to net zero at the Smart Energy Summit in 2021, saying:

“My sense is that we cannot continue to embarrass ourselves on the international stage by debating whether climate change is real or not. We’re well past that... I think we need really strong leadership and making sure that vocal minorities do not stymie the thinking within the community.”

The Illawarra REZ which was well underway before Mr Constance resigned and was officially announced in February of 2023, with then Treasurer and Minister for Energy, Matt Kean saying:

“The Illawarra has a proud history of manufacturing and the REZ will only build on this legacy, powering existing and emerging industries such as offshore wind...”

The announcement included a map indicating that offshore wind was part of the planned REZ spanning across both the Wollongong and Shellharbour LGA’s:



Figure 1: Stylised map of the geographic area of the Illawarra REZ. Offshore wind subject to the Commonwealth’s declaration of an offshore wind zone in the region.

Figure 1.4

As recently as 28 July, current sitting National's front bencher Barnaby Joyce joined Constance and far right former Liberal MP and current Pauline Hanson's One Nation representative Craig Kelly at an event against offshore wind in Lake Illawarra, attended by less than 300 people from across New South Wales.

At this event Joyce further inflamed an already toxic debate with violent and intimidating language around firearms, at a time when the world's leaders were encouraging peace, following an attempted political assassination in the United States.

Representing communities is not always about making the easy choice, but the right choice for the future and the generations to come.

Representative democracy deserves responsible, engaged and informed public debate. It is incumbent upon anyone in public office to respectfully engage in debate, seek out the facts and present them.

It is not a requirement for each of us to agree but public consultation processes should also not be used to weaponise misinformation and stoke community division.

MIS AND DISINFORMATION

There is no denying mis-and-disinformation played an enormous role in the process and soured much of the community from contributing to the debate or even from being able to access factual information.

Countless institutions such as the University of Wollongong, ACF and Greenpeace have endeavoured to counteract mis-and-disinformation and maintain a factual and constructive dialogue, but even organisations of this standing had their environmental credentials questioned and staff harassed.

We are all proven strong supporters of the environment and are of course supportive of vigorous scientific and environmental studies for this project, but the narrative that offshore wind is the greatest threat to our migrating whales is pure misinformation.

One of the many academics who have tried to provide insight within their field on the topic is Professor Gregory Andrews, Australia's first Threatened Species Commissioner and Dharawal man. Professor Andrews has said:

"The science shows Australia's whales do face serious threats – but not from wind farms. By reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, wind farms help protect ocean habitats from the impacts of rising temperatures and ocean acidification.

Wind energy has another noteworthy advantage for whale conservation in regions like the Central Coast, Newcastle and the Hunter, where burning and exporting coal are major activities. Transitioning to renewable energy and ceasing coal exports can substantially reduce shipping traffic. This lowers the risk of ship strikes and noise pollution to whales and thus helps safeguard their well-being."

The campaign against this project in Australia and worldwide by right wing players has been sophisticated and deceiving.

The campaign targeted grass roots community Facebook pages, often posting anonymously or as pseudonyms. There was an instance of academic fraud where the fabrication of a University of Tasmania study, claimed to be published the internationally renowned journal of Marine Policy was disseminated online (Attachment F).

Although this post was eventually disproved, it circulated amongst the community for a number of days and genuine community members formed opinions based on fabricated misinformation.

Much of the misinformation has also spread from the United States of America where campaigns against clean energy is also emerging, albeit America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has firmly stated that:

"No whale mortality has been attributed to offshore wind activities... There are no known connections between any of this offshore wind activity and any whale stranding regardless of species... There is no information that would support any suggestion that any of the equipment that's being used in support of wind development for these site characterization surveys could directly lead to the death of a whale."

We must endeavour to bring the community along with us, with verified and factual information, and counteract blatant and damaging misinformation when it emerges.

VICTIMS OF VITRIOL

For the past twelve months, a number of prominent individuals have emerged against offshore wind and renewable energy transition.

A number of these key players have dealt in fear mongering and misinformation dissemination, with allegations of bullying and harassment of community members online and in real life.

Efforts at engagement, even offers of meetings with ministers, have been rebuffed suggesting that genuine engagement was unlikely to have ever been the motivation of some of the more prominent participants in the debate.

From: [redacted]@responsiblefuture.com.au
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:19 PM
To: Byrnes, Alison (MP Office) <alison.byrnes.MP@aph.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Pacific Ocean off the Illawarra region, New South Wales Public Consultation Summary Report June 2024.

Dear Alison,

Thank you for your email and for offering to arrange a meeting with Minister Bowen.

At this stage I can not see any benefit for our Community for this meeting to occur.

With the impending Senate Inquiry into Community Consultation I feel this is the appropriate and respectful response especially after the Summary Report and area has already been declared.

Again thank you for your time.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Figure 1.5

As elected representatives of our community, we understand that we are held to public account and will face an acceptable level of scrutiny based on our decisions.

What is unacceptable is harassing and intimidatory behaviour online and in the community.

When speaking with local residents and business owners, people have expressed genuine fear of becoming 'victims of vitriol' if they were to express any opinions on this topic.

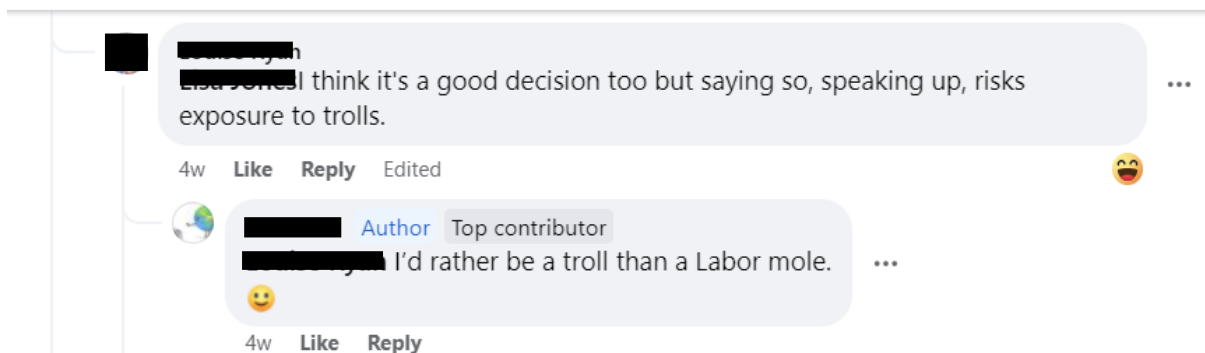


Figure 1.6

This is not where a well informed and cohesive community should be in 2024.

We should be able to come together in a respectful environment to debate ideas and strategies on how we manage our communities into the future.

Community members when expressing their support online have faced trolling and bullying behaviour by fake profiles and pseudonym accounts managed by vocal opponents.

Illawarra Mercury's Post



████████ Smith

Great news for our region and for the skilled mining and steel workers who will be able to transfer their well honed skills in manufacturing, engineering and building to green tech and renewables.



4w Like Reply

191



████████

████████ Smith you're an idiot



4w Like Reply 11



████████

████████ Smith muppet.



4w Like Reply 6



████████

████████ Smith you silly woman



4w Like Reply 7



████████

████████ Smith you honestly need to read up on these disasters in Europe and the US. They are being decommissioned. Meanwhile Bowen and co are salivating wtf.



4w Like Reply

26

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen Community Consultation Practices

Effective community consultation must play a critical role in shaping sustainable energy policies and projects moving forward.

Communities impacted by projects have the right to be involved, with the assurance that their input will influence outcomes. Prioritising the needs and interests of all stakeholders ensures sustainable solutions, while actively seeking involvement and providing necessary information enables meaningful contributions.

Transparent communication is essential for the community to understand how their opinions can meaningfully influence decisions of government.

Government departments are already worn thin after the years of decimation in the public service. Public servants that do not specialise in community consultation should not be expected to perform a role outside of their scope and communities should not be in receipt of such a by-product.

Therefore, we recommend that the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) engage community consultation experts when undertaking new projects, to enhance environmental, social, and governance outcomes whilst also strengthening trust in the Australian government.

2. Increase Public Education Campaigns on Renewable Energy Projects

In an era marked by widespread mis-and-disinformation, it is crucial for the government to invest in advertising the renewable energy transition through public awareness campaigns.

Such advertising would play a key role in providing accurate, reliable information that can counteract false or misleading narratives about renewable energy. Misinformation can lead to public scepticism, resistance, or confusion about the benefits and feasibility of transitioning to renewable energy sources.

By proactively informing the public, governments can build trust and foster informed decision-making among communities. Public awareness campaigns can highlight the economic, environmental, and health benefits of renewable energy, clarify any misconceptions, and encourage widespread support for necessary policy changes and investments.

Additionally, these campaigns can address common fears or uncertainties, helping to create a more informed and supportive public that is crucial for the successful implementation of renewable energy initiatives.

3. Create Community Energy Engagement Hubs

A localised Community Energy Engagement Hub dedicated to major renewable energy projects, established either prior to and during the consultation phase or throughout the entirety of the project, could serve as a trusted resource for providing credible information and support to communities.

By offering face-to-face interactions and access to expert knowledge, a hub could directly address community concerns and misconceptions. This personalised approach could help ease fears, foster open dialogue, and showcase the tangible benefits of renewable energy, shifting perceptions from uncertainty to optimism.

The hub could also play a crucial role in combating misinformation by offering fact-checking services, running educational campaigns, and collaborating with local media to ensure accurate information is widely disseminated.

There is often an unintentional financial barrier with credible information, either published by responsible media mastheads or within academic journals, being held behind pay-walls or subscriptions. A dedicated hub could bring together this wealth of knowledge with experts in renewable energy, communication, and misinformation.

Additionally, a hub could provide practical assistance, such as helping residents access government incentives or rebates, offer training sessions, and creating a feedback avenue for community concerns to reach governments.

This on-the-ground presence could assist with building trust, empowering communities, and ensuring active engagement in the renewable energy transition.

4. Increase Media Reporting Responsibilities

Public debates and community discussions regarding renewable energy projects need to be transparent and fact based.

Local media has a role to play to help foster an informed and fact-based community discussion and in ensuring that accurate information is reported and that mis and disinformation is identified.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) could play an important role in regulating platforms by enforcing rules particularly on digital platforms to monitor, report, and mitigate misinformation that seeks to intentionally undermine communities and significant infrastructure or development.

CONCLUSION

The assertion that the community was not engaged does not stand up to reasonable examination.

However, there are lessons that can be learned from the process and improvements to be made.

We can always do things better.

We all agree that these projects have to stack up environmentally and economically, and there is a lot of research yet to be done on marine life, bird life and our seabed to ensure that any project is suitable for the Illawarra.

The commencement of a legislated process should not be confused with the approval of a project or projects. This remains true of any proposal from the rezoning of land for housing through to the construction of infrastructure through to resources projects.

We acknowledge this consultation process involved some very difficult conversations and generated a huge amount of feedback and questions within and beyond the formal process. We have valued these conversations and welcome the opportunity to further foster conversation on this industry moving forward.

The declaration of a zone is the first part in a long process that may or may not result in an offshore wind project off the Illawarra coast.

It is not the last time that the community will be engaged.

We understand that there are strong views on both sides of this issue. Some claim that the zone should not exist while others say it is too small. Everyone is entitled to get the facts, consider them, form their opinion and be listened to.

The fact remains that there is a clear demonstration that the community has had time to make their views known and did.

The fact also remains that the feedback resulted in substantial changes to the area ultimately declared.

While the result may not have been what some participants wanted it is incorrect to say that they did not have an adequate opportunity to have their say.

Process improvements need to be made to protect the integrity of the consultation process and would be worthy of the Committee's deliberations. It should not be the place to re-prosecute the final decision, a decision we note that will be subject to

further rounds of consultation should a project or projects progress through the assessment process.

As we move forward, it is imperative to maintain open communication, address concerns, and ensure that the development of the offshore wind zone benefits the Illawarra community economically, environmentally, and socially while improving the integrity of our engagement processes.

Yours sincerely



STEPHEN JONES MP



ALISON BYRNES MP



FIONA PHILLIPS MP

ATTACHMENT A

WEDNESDAY JULY 27, 2022 @illawarramercury.com.au

SEX CHARGE NO JAIL FOR FAKE UBER SPORT NOTHING TO FEAR BOYS

\$163M PLAN HOSPITAL EXPANSION

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

WINDS OF CHANGE

The winds of change are blowing, and they're blowing towards the Illawarra. The region is firming as the site of one of Australia's first offshore wind farms, with BlueScope's ability to provide the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of steel required for platforms and wind towers offering the competitive edge over other proposed locations. **GLEN HUMPHRIES reports, P3**

Picture: courtesy of Pirbright Power

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MERCURY

BEFORE

GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

NSW Ports is putting itself at the heart of the state's renewable energy future, releasing concept plans for Port Kembla's Outer Harbour to support offshore wind development projects. The facility would be a significant job generator that would need collaboration between government, private enterprise and the community to turn into reality. **CONNOR PEARCE reports, p4**

AFTER

BOB JANE

BOB JANE T-MARTS WOLLONGONG

4228 3577

T-MARTS

BOBJANE.COM.AU • WE'LL LOOK AFTER YOU

MONDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2023 @illawarramercury.com.au

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LAST BUT NOT LEAST

EXCLUSIVE:

The state government has declared the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone, unlocking a proposed \$43 billion in investment in clean power and storage as well as the potential for 8300 jobs, but some are asking why it has taken this long. **CONNOR PEARCE reports, P5**

NEWS: LABOR COMMITS TO TANGARA TRAINING CENTRE, P4

FRIDAY JUNE 09, 2023 @illawarramercury.com.au

16-PAGE FRIDAY FORM GUIDE INSIDE TODAY bet365

7-DAY TV GUIDE INSIDE TODAY

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

Street libraries are popular in many parts of Australia but until now, not Shellharbour. That's changing thanks to Justine Wallis who, with daughter Ruby at her side, has convinced the council to get things moving, and the community reading. **GLEN HUMPHRIES reports, P3**

WIND SHIFT

Plans for a giant offshore wind farm on the South Coast between Kiama and Jervis Bay have been shifted further north to a stretch of ocean between Shellharbour and Clifton. Proponents BlueFloat Energy will run public information sessions on the proposal next week. **BEN LANGFORD reports, P5**

There's nothing Henry loved more than chasing the next big catch. When he died, we held his funeral at his favourite fishing spot. His family and fishing buddies said goodbye somewhere full of special memories.

The best way to say goodbye is just the way they would have wanted. Hansen & Cole Funerals knows how.

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ATTACHMENT A

TUESDAY AUGUST 15, 2023

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ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

GO CAITLIN!

There's no doubting who Lake Illawarra South Public students are supporting with plenty of Caitlin Foord masks appearing at the Matilda player's former school yesterday ahead of tomorrow's semi-final clash with England. Cheering on the loudest will be Caitlin's nephew Channel Foord (centre), who curiously is the only one in the photo who doesn't look like her!

JANINE GRAHAM reports, P2

FUTURE IS HERE

An Illawarra-based green hydrogen start-up hopes to employ hundreds of locals at its manufacturing hub in Port Kembla as it plans to go to "giga scale". Hysata's factory was opened by Minister for Energy and Climate Change Chris Bowen yesterday and when fully operational will produce electrolyzers which will split water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable electricity to produce green hydrogen. CONNOR PEARCE reports, P3

Invitation to Illawarra Businesses

» Does your business have a product or service that will help energise the Illawarra Region through offshore wind?

» Are you a local business specialising in maritime activities including marine biology or vessel operations?

» Are you looking to establish a business in the Illawarra Region to support the offshore wind industry and employ locals?

Register now →

Energised by: Oceanex, equinar

Illawarra Offshore Wind

MONDAY OCTOBER 09, 2023

illawarramercury.com.au



ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

CAIDEN'S A LUCKY BOY

When young Caiden Hawke was struck by a car in Fairy Meadow and rushed to Sydney by helicopter last week, his parents Brooke and Daniel Hawke feared the worst. Incredibly, Caiden walked out of hospital just two days later with some stitches and a concussion. Now the family wants to assure the young driver involved it was not her fault.

ANGELA THOMPSON reports, P3

WIND FARM CLASHES

Insults and abuse were hurled across the room during a forum on Illawarra wind farm plans at Thirroul community centre on Saturday. Wild claims including wind towers stopping the sunrise and paragliders unable to fly at Bald Hill due to turbulence were made during the meeting. KATE McILWAIN reports, p3

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Senator Ralph Babet
Senator for Victoria

I am voting NO.

Authorised by Clive Palmer for Mineralogy Pty Ltd, Brisbane

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 05, 2023

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ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

SOMETHING'S IN THE WIND

Does the Port of Esbjerg in Denmark provide a glimpse of Port Kembla's future as an onshore hub for a massive ocean wind farm operation? The Mercury's CONNOR PEARCE joined an Illawarra delegation who visited the Danish port last week to see what is involved, how it's been received by locals and the implications for a sustainable, renewable energy source for Australia.

Read Connor's first report on P5.

NEWS **BLUESCOPE DIDN'T EXPECT \$57.5 MILLION FINE** P3

TUESDAY OCTOBER 10, 2023

illawarramercury.com.au



ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

AN ILL WIND

The storm brewing over a wind farm off the Illawarra blew into Wollongong City Council's meeting last night with dozens of protesters and supporters filling the public gallery to vent their opinions on the proposal. Also yesterday it was revealed the community consultation period on the plan has been extended from October 16 to November 15. KATE McILWAIN reports, P3

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WHAT COMES AFTER THE VOICE? THE INVOICE.

Don't think you won't be forced to 'pay the rent'. It's already happened in Western Australia.

Australia. Keep it together. **Vote NO**

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ATTACHMENT A

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

VEGAN TREATS: THE ART OF TARTS *food & wine* RECIPES AND MORE INSIDE TODAY

WE MEAN BUSINESS SPECIAL SERIES CONTINUES ENTREPRENEURS SHARE STORIES OF SUCCESS INSIDE

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

REVEALED: WIND FARM VISUALS

This is how a wind farm 10 kilometres offshore from Bulli Beach will look - at least that's according to the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water which yesterday released visualisations of how the turbines would appear from land. For a visual of how they would look if they were 20 kilometres offshore, turn the page.

CONNOR PEARCE reports, P3. EDITORIAL, P29

The Race Day that stops a nation

The Big Dance + The Melbourne Cup

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7TH

STARTS AT 10:00AM AEST

SATURDAY OCTOBER 28, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

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PINEAPPLE ON PIZZA? Our not-so-great divides **GARRY LINNELL**

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

explore EXCLUSIVE

MY VOYAGE FROM BERGEN TO BARCELONA

Booker Prize winner Shehan Karunatilaka writes for us

INSIDE

CALL TO ARMS

Organisers of tomorrow's rally against an Illawarra offshore wind farm are hoping more than 1000 people will turn out at Flagstaff Hill to show their opposition to the proposal. A spokesman said more than 25,000 flyers had been handed out urging people to attend the rally which, despite being promoted as a "peaceful community protest", has drawn the attention of police who have rostered on extra resources for the event. **CONNOR PEARCE** reports, P5

SEE INSIDE FOR 8 PAGES OF

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TIPS, TRICKS WHEN TRAVELLING ABROAD WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW - NOEL WHITTAKER

TRAVEL PLUS READER QUESTIONS ANSWERED INSIDE

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

Fear Fest frightfully good fun!

Halloween came early for the crowds who descended on Port Kembla on Saturday for the suburb's annual Fear Fest celebration. Among those who joined in the fun were the Steampunk Vagabonds who masked up for the occasion.

MORE PICTURES, P4

WIND FARM RALLY DRAWS HUNDREDS

Organisers of yesterday's wind farm protest rally at Flagstaff Hill would have been well pleased with the turnout as hundreds gathered to hear speakers from across the community condemn plans to place wind turbines offshore from the Illawarra.

NATALIE CROKON reports, P3

Picture by **WESLEY LONIGAN**

NEWS COUNCIL SAYS CBD'S NEW CYCLEWAYS ARE HERE TO STAY P5

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 08, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

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MELBOURNE CUP 2023

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

MERCURY

No fight needed, just two good

Jockey Mark Zahra has secured consecutive Melbourne Cup crowns after Without A Fight exploded out of the pack to win the race that stops a nation by two lengths on Tuesday, from Soulcombe and Sheraz. **REPORT INSIDE**

BATTLE ON HOME FRONT: RBA lifts interest rates again on Cup Day

Picture: AAP and Getty Images

BLOWN AWAY

Wind farm operator BlueFloat has withdrawn its proposal for 105 wind turbines off the Illawarra coast from the environmental approval process just days after the period for public comment opened. The company says it's now reconsidering its timing.

CONNOR PEARCE reports P3

NEWS: SAFETY BLITZ TARGETS BUILDING SITES: P5

ATTACHMENT A

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

The BIGGEST BUCKET LIST Giveaway! **5x TripADeal \$10,000** Trips of a lifetime to be won!
SINGAPORE BLING New shine for city state explore
CAN AI BE FAB? From The Beatles to the grave GARRY LINNELL

ILLAWARRA EST 1855
MERCURY
 Guess who's in town?
 Is that who I think it is? Little Silver Beswick and Velvet Schofield got a sneak peek of Santa as he settled into his digs at Wollongong Central ahead of his official arrival and welcome parade tomorrow.
 Story, P3
 Pictures by SYLVIA LEBER

FISHING FEARS
 An Illawarra commercial lobster fisherman has warned his livelihood and the rest of the local fishing industry will be wiped out if a wind farm is established offshore. Not only that, but the area's main game fishing reefs will also be destroyed, according to Mark Horne. **JANINE GRAHAM reports, P8**

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 8 Blandell Parade, Corrimal | T. 4225 4700 | www.illawarradiggers.com.au
Lest We Forget
 Illawarra Diggers Aged Care resident 105-year-old David Napper, one of several returned service men and women at the Corrimal complex, was two weeks old when WWI ended.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

The BIGGEST BUCKET LIST Giveaway! **5x TripADeal \$10,000** Trips of a lifetime to be won!
AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR NSW winners announced REPORT INSIDE

ILLAWARRA EST 1855
MERCURY
FAKING IT TO MAKE IT
 A petition handed into Federal Parliament against the proposed Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone garnered 11,000 signatures but Cunningham MP Alison Byrnes, also a member of the Petitions Committee, said while the great majority of those who signed this petition were genuine, there was a "co-ordinated effort" to undermine support and initiate community opposition with 200 signatures found to be fake. **CONNOR PEARCE reports, P4**
HOW THE TURBINES WILL WORK IN THE ILLAWARRA. Q AND A, P6-7
HAVE YOUR SAY. MERCURY EDITORIAL, P17 and head to illawarramercury.com.au

THE Gong
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MONDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2023 illawarramercury.com.au

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The BIGGEST BUCKET LIST Giveaway!
CAPITAL GAINS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOEL WHITTAKER

ILLAWARRA EST 1855
MERCURY
Going loco for locos
 Dozens of families joined light rail train buffs yesterday to celebrate the 100th birthday of the little loco known as Burra at the Illawarra Light Rail Museum at Albion Park. The weather was perfect and everyone was keen for a ride. **GRACE CRIVELLARO reports, P6**

LIBS SENSE WIND SHIFT
 With barely three days to go until submissions close on the Illawarra wind farm proposal, local Liberal Party leaders have joined the call for the plan to be scrapped. The party will hold a meeting tonight in Kiama in conjunction with the Coalition Against Offshore Wind group which will be addressed by former NSW transport minister and now Senate hopeful, Andrew Constance.
CONNOR PEARCE reports, P3

SPORT: HUMBLED HAWKS LOOK AT OPTIONS AFTER ANOTHER LOSS: P28

Offshore wind farm closer

ENERGY

BY GLEN HUMPHRIES

BLUESCOPE could be a big winner out of plans to build an offshore wind farm 20 kilometres off Port Kembla.

Oceanex Energy CEO Andy Evans was in the city on Monday to talk to local industry about the company's plans for the Illawarra - one of five locations touted for an offshore wind farm.

larily to the Commonwealth government - and say let's get moving. We've been patient but we've got a region that's ready to go and support nation-changing projects."

For the construction of the offshore farms at Wollongong and a planned one in Newcastle, the company would require around 1.5 million tonnes of steel for platforms and wind towers.

BlueScope had already confirmed it can supply steel for those purposes, and Mr Evans said the close location



Oceanex CEO Andy Bell

of industries like steelmaking was part of the appeal for Port Kembla as an offshore wind farm spot.

Mr Evans said there were targeting a 2028 start date for construction and there was the expectation that the project would create thousands of jobs.

"We're looking at up to 200 jobs throughout the development phase," he said.

"Once we commence construction we're looking at 3000 direct jobs - most of those will be local. And once we get that through that three- to four-year construction period, there will be about 300 permanent jobs

that will be local. They need to be to service the turbines and all the land infrastructure."

Even 20 kilometres out to sea the turbines will be visible from the coast though most of the structure is underwater. Mr Evans said an offshore wind farm was better at power generation than one on land, simply because there's more wind out over the water.

"The turbines are larger out at sea because it's a much stronger wind blowing

a lot more consistently," Mr Evans said.

"You're looking at a wind that's blowing most of the time so you're not just generating in small gaps, it's blowing fairly consistently."

"We've learned over the last 10 years that afternoon sea breezes actually exist and when most people want to start using their electricity it's usually late afternoon."

"So offshore wind is really good in terms of reliability and creating electricity when the market needs it."

27 July 2022

Declaration paves the way for renewables

REZ to grow jobs, cut bills

EXCLUSIVE

BY CONNOR PEARCE

THE NSW government has declared the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone, unlocking \$43 billion in potential investment in clean energy in the region.

The Illawarra is the last of five renewable energy zones across the state and Treasurer and minister for energy Matt Kean said the Illawarra was "ideal" to host the energy transition.

"The Illawarra is an ideal region to host a REZ, thanks to its existing energy, port and transport infrastructure, its highly skilled workforce and strong demand from existing industries to decarbonise," he said.

The Illawarra draft Renewable Energy Zone was announced last year, with the public able to give feedback. Following the final declaration today, the Illawarra REZ becomes law and government infrastructure planner EnergyCo can begin the formal process of deciding what

projects go where. An expressions of interest period in the zone last year returned \$43 billion of projects, with the bulk of that, \$35 billion, in offshore wind.

With the zone now declared, EnergyCo will auction the opportunity to build wind farms, solar arrays and batteries through a competitive tender process.

"This is a huge win for the Illawarra with projects registering their interest showing a potential to create more than 8,300 jobs, not including the huge employment potential of offshore wind," Mr Kean said.

Following the draft declaration in December last year, some minor changes were made to the boundary of the zone, covering Wollongong and Shellharbour.

When first announced, the Illawarra was not included in the state's renewable energy zones, which included New England, Central-West Orana and the South West. Wollongong MP Paul Scully, who made the amendments to

the legislation to include the Illawarra in the government's renewable energy zone plans, said it was a case of "better late than never".

"We should have been first off the block," he said.

"Being able to build some of the generation capacity should have made us front and centre of building our renewable energy future."

The declaration removes one of the regulatory roadblocks to building offshore wind in the Illawarra. Last week, NSW Ports revealed their plans for a wind turbine assembly facility in Port Kembla's outer harbour.

Speaking at the launch of the plan, project director at wind farm builder Blue Float David Delamore said the zone was preparing plans for 100 turbines 40 kilometres offshore.

The Illawarra is the second largest renewable energy zone by indicated investment and jobs, with only the Hunter-Central Coast region attracting more interest.



NSW Treasurer and energy minister Matt Kean visits BlueScope in 2020. File picture.

27 February 2023

It's more than just hot air

ENERGY

BY GLEN HUMPHRIES

WOLLONGONG has been confirmed as one of six locations around Australia to explore offshore wind energy generation.

Federal Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen announced the proposed regions yesterday morning.

As well as the Pacific Ocean off the Illawarra, the Hunter coastline was also named as a site in NSW.

In Bass Strait, locations off northern Tasmania and Gippsland have been identified. The other two regions are the Southern Ocean region off Portland in Victoria and the Indian Ocean region off Perth.

Public consultation on the Bass Strait site off Gippsland is already underway, with details of the roll-out across the other five regions to be announced shortly.



The waters off the Illawarra could one day be home to an offshore wind farm

Mr Bowen said the offshore wind farms had the potential to create a large amount of energy.

"We have some of the best wind resources in the world - just one rotation of one offshore wind turbine provides as much energy as an average rooftop solar installation generates

in one day," Mr Bowen said.

Cunningham MP Alison Byrnes said she had raised with Mr Bowen how suitable the Illawarra was for an offshore wind sector.

"This is exciting news for the Illawarra," Ms Byrnes said.

"The fact that the Illawarra is one of the first six regions in the country demonstrates not only the potential of the region's natural resources to help deliver renewable energy, but it is an opportunity for the region to build a new industry while powering existing ones."

In terms of job creation, Mr Bowen said an Australian offshore wind industry could create between 3000 and 8000 jobs a year.

"The world's climate emergency is Australia's regional jobs opportunity and offshore wind is just one example," he said.

"Unlocking the offshore wind industry is an exciting new chapter for Australia and we want to build a platform of community col-

laboration and support around it.

"This new industry will provide opportunities to reduce emissions and fast-track job and economic development opportunities for regional Australia particularly in clean energy generation and manufacturing."

The announcement comes just over a week after Oceanex Energy CEO Andy Evans came to Wollongong to talk to local industry about their plans for the Illawarra - one of the company's five locations for an offshore wind farm.

"The turbines are larger out at sea because it's a much stronger wind blowing a lot more consistently," Mr Evans said.

"You're looking at a wind that's blowing most of the time so you're not just generating in small gaps, it's blowing fairly consistently."

"Offshore wind is really good in terms of reliability and creating electricity when the market needs it."

06 August 2023

Wind farm a win for jobs

BY CONNOR PEARCE

A CHORUS of union and business groups have backed the federal government's selection of the Illawarra as a location for offshore wind farms.

Federal Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen announced the Illawarra was one of six proposed regions to host the water-based wind turbines on Friday.

Public consultation on a location in Gippsland, Victoria is already underway,

with further details for the Illawarra and the other four regions to be announced soon.

Business Illawarra executive director Adam Zarth said the decision meant early consultations with firms including Oceanex Energy and BlueFloat Energy could move forward.

"This announcement provides the much-needed certainty for these proponents to invest further and for the community to prepare and plan for these major pro-



Wind farm support

jects," he said.

"The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union state secretary NSW and ACT,

Cory Wright, said offshore wind turbines could energise industry on land.

"Australia could become a global offshore wind superpower, creating a long-term sustainable manufacturing industry, and a jobs boom here in NSW," he said.

"Training should be prioritised to ensure local workers are positioned for long-term sustainable jobs and Australian industry is capable to maximise opportunities from the shift to renewables."

Both business and unions are calling for the government to produce the wind turbines locally. In the case of the Illawarra, BlueScope has previously indicated its intent to produce steel for wind turbines in Port Kembla.

"Having our own local steelworks at Port Kembla means that BlueScope will invest further in expanding its current manufacture and supply of the steel required for wind turbine components on the back of this announcement which is an-

other boost for the region," Mr Zarth said.

Mr Wright said offshore wind farms could provide a social and economic boost.

"By actively ensuring towers and turbines are produced locally, the environmental benefits would be amplified by delivering economic and social outcomes."

Mr Zarth also highlighted that electricity generated by offshore wind farms could provide the power needed for the production of green hydrogen.

08 August 2023

ATTACHMENT B

ALISON BYRNES MP FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

SPRING 2022

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Albanese Government's achievements: first 100 days
SEE INSIDE



Standing up for our community

This is just the beginning!

The Albanese Labor Government has been busy delivering on our commitments to build a better Australia for over 100 days - but I know there is still more to do including improving the National Disability Insurance Scheme, fixing our aged care sector and increasing access to affordable housing.

As our community continues to grow, I'll work hard to make our region an even better place to work, live, and raise a family.

Alison

Welcome to my Community Update as your new Federal Member for Cunningham.

I'm working hard to help our people in this region through my updates.

Please sign up for my email newsletter



Albanese Labor Government: Our first 100 days

The Albanese Labor Government and I have wasted no time getting to work, building a better Australia.

These are some of the steps we've taken in our first 100 days:

Climate Change

Australians want action on climate change. That's why we've legislated a minimum emissions reduction target of 43% by 2030.

Wage Rise

We've supported an increase to the minimum wage, delivering a 5.2% pay rise for 2.8 million Australians.

Cheaper Medicines

For the first time, the maximum cost of general scripts under the PBS will be nearly 30% cheaper for millions of Australians (from 1 January 2023).

A person on one medication can save up to \$150 every year, someone on three or four medications can save \$300-\$450 annually.

Fixing Aged Care

The Government's putting dignity, quality and humanity back into aged care with 24/7 nurses, capping admin fees, and improving accountability in the sector.

Jobs and Skills

We're establishing Jobs and Skills Australia, and held a National Summit bringing employers, unions and others together to identify and act on labour market issues and shortages.

TAFE

180,000 fee-free TAFE places are on the way.

New Paid Leave

We're legislating 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave for 11 million eligible workers.

Integrity

We've started work on a federal integrity commission. We're rebuilding our vital international relationships. And we've returned the Nadesalingam family home to Biloela, Queensland.

Pay Equity

The Government, with employers, unions and other peak organisations, is addressing pay inequity in Australia's workforce and the gender pay gap for many of Australia's low-paid female workers.

A Voice to Parliament

We've started important work on giving First Nations people a voice on laws that affect them.



Working & delivering for Cunningham

Every day, my focus is helping people, community organisations and local businesses experiencing difficulties. I've also been working on some important local priorities.

Training workers for renewable jobs, now & the future

To develop the energy workforce of the future, I've secured \$10 million for an Energy Futures Skills Centre at the University of Wollongong and \$2.5 million for a Renewable Energy Training Facility at Wollongong TAFE.

Warrong Community Battery

I've secured funding for a community battery for Warrong which will serve up to 500 local households - helping to cut electricity bills, emissions and take pressure off the grid.

Unlocking jobs and clean energy with offshore wind

I've also proposed the Illawarra be one of six potential regions to have an offshore wind energy zone.

Unlocking offshore wind generation in the Illawarra will provide clean energy to power households, businesses and industries while creating local jobs.

Local affordable housing

10,000 Australians living in regional areas like the Illawarra will be able to save up to \$32,000 in lenders mortgage insurance and secure a home loan with a deposit as low as 5% with the Government guaranteeing up to 15% of the home's purchase price.

This will create great opportunities for local first home buyers.

For more details, please visit my website at AlisonByrnesMP.com.au or scan here



Unlocking jobs and clean energy with offshore wind

I've also proposed the Illawarra be one of six potential regions to have an offshore wind energy zone.

Unlocking offshore wind generation in the Illawarra will provide clean energy to power households, businesses and industries while creating local jobs.



ALISON BYRNES MP FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM



I recently delivered my first speech to Federal Parliament, explaining my commitment to the Illawarra:

I care about people, I care about their jobs, and I care about our environment.

Like many families, my mum migrated to Australia where she met my dad who worked in the mines. Growing up we experienced many joys and hardships. I've lived in the Illawarra my entire life, attending Woonona Primary and High School.

Wollongong has changed since I was born but our community values endure like hardened steel. Our values are founded on need: to trust and protect your mates in dangerous workplaces, to understand your neighbours born in different parts of the world, and for fairness to guide decision-making.

The Illawarra is innovative, tough and clever and I'm optimistic about what we will achieve. Together, I look forward to making the Illawarra an even better place to live and work - for you and your loved ones.



To read a full copy of my speech, visit my website or scan here:

Authorised by Alison Byrnes MP, ALP, 74 Crown St Wollongong NSW 2500. Printed locally to support local jobs.



How I can help you

As your local member, I am able to assist with a range of Federal Government matters, including:

- Centlink
- Immigration
- NDIS
- Citizenship
- Child Support
- Medicare
- Passports
- Aged Care
- Australian Taxation Office
- Telecommunications
- Community Grants & Certificates
- Congratulatory Messages

My office is ready to help, please get in touch:

74 Crown St, Wollongong NSW 2500 | 02 4228 5899 | Alison.Byrnes.MP@aph.gov.au | AlisonByrnesMP.com.au



Alison Byrnes

Federal Member for Cunningham

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WIND IN THE SAILS OF ILLAWARRA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE



05 August 2022



The Hon Stephen Jones MP

Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services

Member for Whitlam

Alison Byrnes MP

Member for Cunningham

The Albanese Government is taking the next step to help secure the Illawarra as a renewable energy superpower announcing the region as one of six proposed offshore wind energy regions.

Unlocking offshore wind in the Illawarra will help to power households, businesses and industries while creating local jobs.

Offshore wind will also help to provide the baseload power that a burgeoning hydrogen industry in the region will need to produce hydrogen that could be used for transport and steelmaking.

Today's announcement signals a firm commitment to renewable energy generation with the Illawarra likely to play a key role in achieving its target of 82 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030.

Ms Byrnes said that one of the first matters she raised with Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen MP, was the fact that the Illawarra had all the ingredients to grow an offshore wind sector.

There will be more details of the public consultation process soon, with the local community, environmental groups, industry and recreational and other maritime users to have an opportunity to have their say.

The consultation periods will be an opportunity for all stakeholders with an interest in the area to provide feedback and will be facilitated by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Offshore wind industries in other countries have been established where there are good prevailing winds, a strong industrial base and a skilled workforce. The fact that we have a deep-water port makes the Illawarra's case even stronger.

Unlocking the potential of offshore wind fits well with the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone which NSW Labor was able to secure.

The announcement was a positive end to a week of Parliamentary sittings which saw the Government pass the first legislative hurdle to lock in an emissions reduction target.

Quotes attributable to Alison Byrnes, Member for Cunningham:

"This is exciting news for the Illawarra", Member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes MP said.

"The fact that the Illawarra is one of the first six regions in the country demonstrates not only the potential of the regions natural resources to help deliver renewable energy but it is an opportunity for the region to build a new industry while powering existing ones."

"In short this is the start of a process where the Illawarra could contribute to lowering emissions while supporting and creating jobs"

Quotes attributable to Stephen Jones, Member for Whitlam:

"This week was a win for Australia's future and for people in the Illawarra. We've got a renewable energy target firmly in our sights and now it's time to get to work."

"Today's announcement is a step forward in reaffirming the Illawarra as a prime location for renewable energy infrastructure"





Alison Byrnes

Federal Member for Cunningham

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Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone ▼



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CONSULTATION OPENS FOR OFFSHORE WIND ZONE IN THE ILLAWARRA, DRIVING REGIONAL JOBS AND INVESTMENT



14 August 2023



CHRIS BOWEN MP

MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

MEDIA RELEASE

ATTACHMENT C

The Albanese Government is working to unlock renewable energy jobs, energy security and job security in the Illawarra with consultation now open on a new offshore wind zone off the Illawarra.

This comprehensive consultation period is open until 16 October and includes six community information sessions across the Illawarra.

We strongly encourage all community members, industries and businesses to participate and make sure their questions are answered and concerns are heard.

The proposed offshore wind area is 1461 square kilometres with the potential to generate up to 4.2GW from offshore wind farms.

This would be enough to power up to 3.4 million homes.

Just one turn of one offshore wind turbine provides as much energy as an average rooftop solar installation generates in a whole day, and it produces energy more consistently than onshore wind.

The Illawarra was identified for its strong offshore wind resource, major port infrastructure and role as an industrial and manufacturing hub looking to transform to greater renewable generation and thrive in a changing global economy.

The region has a diverse and skilled workforce, and the introduction of an offshore wind industry will bolster its existing strengths and spearhead the economic opportunities of the energy transformation.

The zone open for consultation would be at least 10 km from shore, out to 30km at Kiama, and would be able to deliver up to 2,500 jobs in construction and 1,250 jobs ongoing.

The development of offshore wind in the Illawarra will provide new renewable energy options for Illawarra industries.

Communities often have questions about amenity, environmental impacts, shipping and fishing. The community consultation process is an opportunity for those questions to be raised so that the government has the chance to address them in a final decision.

Info sessions will start week commencing 18 September, providing an opportunity for all community members, workers, residents, industry groups and businesses to ask questions, and provide feedback on a potential offshore wind industry for the Illawarra.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, emphasised the transformative potential of this new energy industry for the Illawarra.

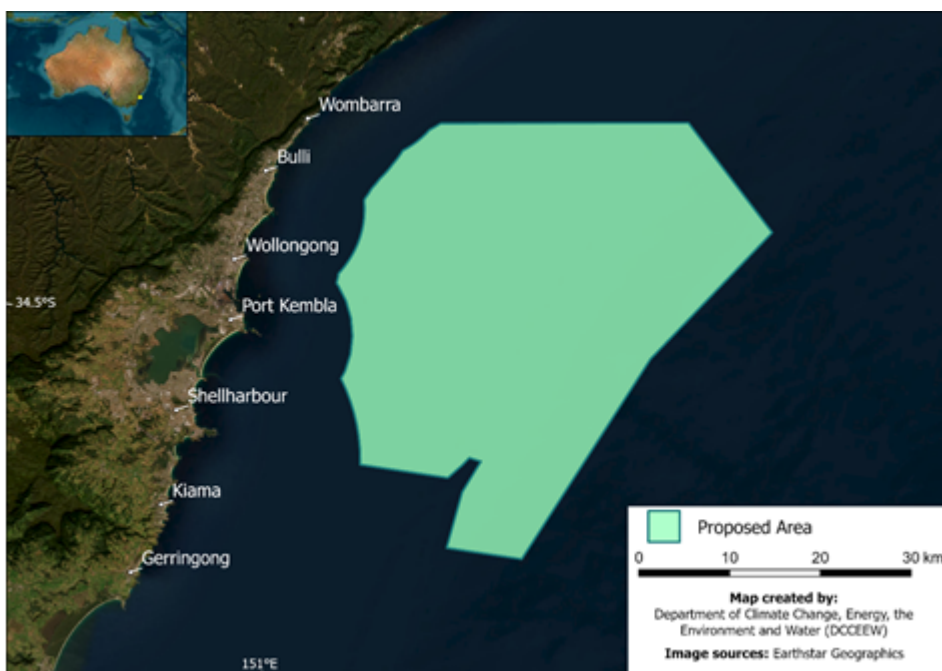
“Offshore wind is energy rich and jobs rich but despite having some of the best wind resources in the world, Australia doesn’t currently have any offshore wind.

“This presents a huge economic opportunity for the regions that help power Australia – like the Illawarra, to continue to power our nation for generations to come.

“This is a genuine consultation and I encourage all community members to get involved and have their say on the proposed zone.” Minister Bowen said.

In addition to the Illawarra, the Hunter and the Southern Ocean the Government has previously announced the Bass Strait region off Northern Tasmania, and the Indian Ocean region off Perth/Bunbury as further regions earmarked for offshore wind zones.

For more information on the Illawarra offshore electricity area public consultation, visit <https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/oei-illawarra>



Community information sessions

Town	Time and Date	Location
Bulli	Monday 18 September 2023	Bulli Senior Citizens Centre
	4pm to 7pm	8 Hospital Road, Bulli
Port Kembla	Tuesday 19 September 2023	Port Kembla Senior Citizens Centre
	10am to 12pm	cnr Allan Street and Wentworth Lane, Port Kembla
Wollongong	Tuesday 19 September 2023	Wollongong Art Gallery
	4pm to 7pm	46 Burelli Street, Wollongong
Shellharbour	Wednesday 20 September 2023	Shellharbour Surf Lifesaving Club
	10am to 12pm	115 Junction Road, Shellharbour
Kiama	Wednesday 20 September 2023	Kiama Leagues Club
	4pm to 7pm	110 Terralong Street, Kiama
Gerringong	Thursday 21 September 2023	Gerringong Town Hall
	10am to 12pm	106 Fern Street, Gerringong





Alison Byrnes

Federal Member for Cunningham

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OFFSHORE WIND CONSULTATION SUBMISSION



15 November 2023



Today, I have released my submission on the proposed zone for an offshore wind area in the Pacific Ocean off Illawarra region.

The release of the proposed zone which would allow for the establishment of an offshore wind development in the Illawarra has started a very hard conversation in our local community about the future of our local economy and how we provide affordable power to households and industry.

My submission supports the proposal for the Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone; however, this support comes with a number of conditions, I recommend:

- 1. Based on strong community feedback, I recommend that the Government move the nearest point of the zone to the coast from 10kms to 20kms from shore.*
- 2. To address concerns about the visual impact of an offshore wind farm, that developers and the Department aim to minimise the height of any future development while allowing generation capacity to be met.*
- 3. That only projects that meet the strictest environmental protections including strict requirements for marine, bird, wave, fishing and reef protections should be considered.*
- 4. That a strong and fair Community Benefit Dividend be incorporated as a requirement of the licencing structure.*
- 5. Any offshore wind generation proposal must include remediation and end of life provisions so that materials used are either reused or recycled once it has reached end of life.*
- 6. That any licensee has the highest local content provisions ensuring that local workers and businesses benefit in building and maintaining local power generation. We need to look at making turbines locally, building local industry capacity, local jobs and training our local workers.*
- 7. The establishment of an Illawarra offshore wind local advisory committee that allows the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and any future developers and researchers, to work with business, industry, unions, First Nations and community organisations to ensure that local community expectations and standards are upheld in any future development.*

Our stunning Illawarra coastline is a special and magical place for all of us.

This consultation process has involved some very difficult conversations and generated a huge amount of feedback and questions within and beyond the formal process.

I have valued these conversations and compiled my submission based on thousands of conversations, emails, the Department's six consultation sessions attended by over 1200 people, and the additional two community forums that I convened, and that was attended by 750 people online and in person.

We currently have approximately 36 per cent renewable energy in the grid and it is going to be a huge task to lift this to 82 per cent by 2030 - it will involve a mix of solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, hydrogen, pumped hydro, batteries and other forms of renewable energy.

This is a significant task and one that must be shared fairly across our nation, and a task that we are required to tackle to protect our bushland from devastating fires, our beaches from erosion and our farmers from drought and floods.

Since my election as the Member for Cunningham in 2022, I have not shied away from discussing with the community the opportunities and challenges that face us as we seek to reduce emissions and decarbonise our economy, coupled with the need to sustain and create well-paid jobs.

Considering an Illawarra offshore wind zone and how we prepare for the estimated close to 2,500 construction jobs and 1,250 ongoing jobs for local workers that could come with it is a large part of that community conversation.

Wollongong is recognised as a *City of Innovation* - one that uses the world's best science together with industry collaboration to overcome the transformational challenges we face. We have seen innovation and technological change adopted by local industry over many years and that has led to safer and less polluting methods of production that not only involve workers but benefited the entire region.

There are still many parts of this endeavour yet to be determined and the community has a direct role in shaping our future energy production should it progress. I would encourage everyone to seek their information from reputable sources -not blogs, websites or social media seeking to sow seeds of doubt or fear and spread misinformation.

ATTACHMENT C

We need to look at ways to ensure that genuine conversations can occur and genuine questions can be raised without the volumes of misinformation, fake emails and social media accounts spreading misinformation.

I believe that as a city of steel, renewable energy generation, manufacturing, a sustainable marine environment, tourism and other industries can co-exist in the region as they have done for decades.

MY FULL SUBMISSION TO THE CONSULTATION



Authorised by Alison Byrnes MP, 74 Crown Street, Wollongong NSW 2500





Alison Byrnes

Federal Member for Cunningham

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ILLAWARRA VOICES SPEAK UP AT NATIONAL CLIMATE AND ENERGY JOBS SUMMIT



Alison Byrnes MP

Member for Cunningham

Member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes MP pushed the Illawarra as a critical location for Australia's renewable energy future at yesterday's National Climate and Energy Jobs Summit hosted by Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen at Parliament House.

ATTACHMENT C

The Summit brought together stakeholders to help deliver the secure and green jobs of today and tomorrow.

As Australia becomes a renewable energy superpower, regional Australia could see a jobs boom. Independent modelling of Labor's Powering Australia Plan shows that 600,000 jobs can be created by 2030, with five out of every six jobs being in the regions. In addition to growing jobs, the government will provide \$100 million to support 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships.

Ms Byrnes attended the Canberra summit with other Illawarra representatives, Co-convener of Recharge Illawarra, Arthur Rorris and Director of the Energy Futures Network, Ty Christopher.

The Illawarra delegation attended to share our region's potential for growing renewable energy jobs and manufacturing while helping to reduce emissions.

Ms Byrnes has secured \$10 million for an Energy Futures Skills Centre at the University of Wollongong, \$2.5 million for a Renewable Energy Training facility at Wollongong TAFE, a community solar battery for Warrawong, and had Wollongong nominated as one of six offshore wind energy zones.

The mini summit will feed into the Prime Minister's Jobs and Skills summit on 1 and 2 September which will bring together unions, employers, civil society and governments to address our greatest economic challenges.

Quotes attributable to Alison Byrnes, Member for Cunningham:

"Yesterday's summit was a great opportunity to put the Illawarra's case for jobs and investment in new and existing industries."

"As a region we are ready, our industries are ready and I will continue to use the skills and expertise in renewable energy in our region to help not only generate energy but to generate jobs and opportunities."



Authorised by Alison Byrnes MP, 74 Crown Street, Wollongong NSW 2500



**Alison Byrnes**

Federal Member for Cunningham

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OFFSHORE WIND COMMUNITY TOWN HALL FORUMS

29 September 2023



The Member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes MP, will be hosting two community Town Hall forums on Saturday 7 October and Wednesday 11 October.

The forums will provide members of the community an opportunity to hear from a panel of industry, academic and community leaders, as well as have their questions answered.

The panel will include:

- Yael Stone (Hi Neighbour Founding Director),
- Arthur Rorris (Secretary, South Coast Labour Council),
- Dr Jodi Edwards (UOW Vice Chancellors Research Fellow and NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year finalist),
- Ty Christopher (UOW Energy Futures Network) and;
- Ellen Couch (UOW Student).

Rolling out a huge project like offshore wind is a massive task and not one that we will take lightly, but offshore wind could help power local industries, create jobs, increase economic growth and reduce emissions.

This proposal is a first step to seek public feedback on how communities and industry use coastal and ocean resources across the Illawarra region.

Saturday 7 October	Wednesday 11 October
Community Town Hall and Panel Discussion: 1pm-3pm	Community Town Hall and Panel Discussion: 4pm-6pm
Q&A Session with Alison Byrnes MP and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water: 3pm-5pm	Q&A Session with Alison Byrnes MP and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water: 6pm-8pm
VENUE: Thirroul Community Centre	VENUE: University of Wollongong

REGISTRATION: <https://alisonbyrnesmp.com.au/community/upcoming-events/>



Authorised by Alison Byrnes MP, 74 Crown Street, Wollongong NSW 2500



Statutory Declaration
OATHS ACT 1900, NSW, EIGHTH SCHEDULE

I, [redacted], do solemnly and sincerely declare that
[name of declarant]

on the evening of Thursday 28th Sept. 2023 I attended a community meeting held in opposition to the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone. The meeting was held at Coledale Community Centre from 7:30pm to 9:30pm. During the presentation by members of the community group "Coalition Against Offshore Wind," Mr Grant Drinkwater and other presenters encouraged community members to submit multiple submissions to the REZ, through the Fed. Govt website using alternate or fake email addresses. There were approx. 125 community members present. The fake submissions were encouraged to be in opposition to the REZ. I have retained contemporaneous notes of this meeting

and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1900.

Declared at: Wollongong on 10 Nov. 2023
[place] [date]
[redacted]
[signature of declarant]

in the presence of an authorised witness, who states:

I, [redacted], a [redacted]
[name of authorised witness] [qualification of authorised witness]

certify the following matters concerning the making of this statutory declaration by the person who made it: [* please cross out any text that does not apply]

- 1. *I saw the face of the person OR *I did not see the face of the person because the person was wearing a face covering, but I am satisfied that the person had a special justification for not removing the covering, and
- 2. *I have known the person for at least 12 months OR *I have not known the person for at least 12 months, but I have confirmed the person's identity using an identification document and the document I relied on was NSW Drivers Licence
[describe identification document relied on]

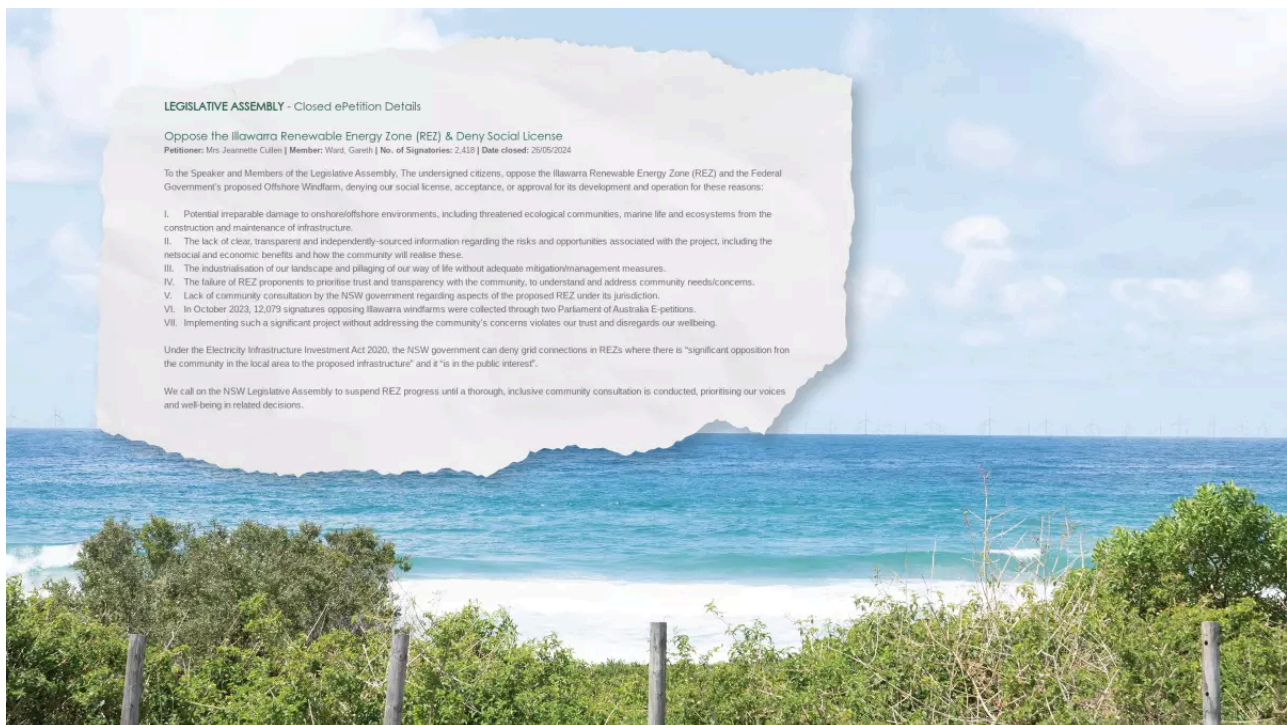
[redacted] 10/11/2023
[signature of authorised witness] [date]

 **view** [Illawarra Mercury's complete view of property.](#)[Home](#) / [News](#) / [Beyond The Horizon](#)

Illawarra anti-offshore wind farm petition fails to reach target

By [Connor Pearce](#)

Updated May 31 2024 - 1:50pm, first published May 30 2024 - 2:53pm



An anti-offshore wind petition has failed to reach the required amount to be debated in NSW parliament. Graphic by ACM

An Illawarra anti-wind farm group is distancing itself from a petition submitted to the NSW parliament, after the petition received less than the required amount to be debated in parliament.

In December 2023, an ePetition was launched with NSW parliament which called on parliament to oppose the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone and a [proposed offshore windfarm](#).

The lead petitioner is Mrs Jeannette Cullen, and in a post to an anti-offshore wind Facebook group, a user named Jenny Cullen announced the petition in January, with a link to the online form to complete the petition.

Over the next months, the petition is regularly shared to the same Facebook group, which has over 8000 members.

Other posts by other users suggest that the petition needs 20,00 signatures. ePetitions with over 20,000 signatures are debated in the Legislative Assembly.

By May, some posts raised concerns that the petition by then attracting 2,000 signatures is not getting enough traction, with one comment wondering why the petition is not garnering the same level of support as the petition to the federal government in 2023.

"Across the 3 Facebook pages who are opposed to OSW [offshore wind] there are over 15,000 members. There are currently 2,274 signatures on the petition" one user asked in early May.

"I just don't get how that can be, it's been doing the rounds for so long," another replies.

"Each time I've tried to sign it says already signed (even when I try a different email and hubby's name) which makes me think I must have signed already," an additional user replies.

Unlike the federal petition, signatories to the NSW petition must tick a box that confirms they are NSW residents and there are additional procedures to prevent duplication.

After [reporting by the Illawarra Mercury of prizes](#) on offer for signatures to the federal petition, an investigation found nearly 200 duplicates to the federal government petition, which attracted 11,291 signatures, however there could have been more.

"It's not possible to verify if people signed the petition using different names as well as email accounts," Susan Templeman, Labor MP and chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions said when the petition was tabled in federal parliament in November last year.

When the NSW petition closed on Sunday, May 26, it had attracted 2418 signatures. A petition to stop cockle collecting in Lake Illawarra attracted 3410 signatures in 2020.

The *Illawarra Mercury* approached [Responsible Future \(Illawarra Chapter\)](#) for comment on the petition after it closed, however a spokesperson said the petition was not launched by the association and therefore could not comment.

This is despite [Jenny Cullen being referred to as the President of the association](#). The association's website also included links to the petition and a text box saying the petition was "initiated" by the organisation.

The association spokesperson said this was an error on the part of the site's web developer.

The petition was also promoted in anti-offshore wind farm groups with a video that includes the association's branding.

Responsible Future (Illawarra Chapter) offshore wind petition Illawarra Mercury

0:34

watch on

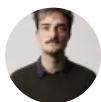
■ A video promoting an anti-offshore wind petition to NSW Parliament including branding of Responsible Future.

The *Mercury* requested comment from Jeannette Cullen, however the association declined, apologising for any confusion caused.

ePetitions with less than 20,000 signatures are forwarded to the minister responsible and the minister is required to reply within 35 days. This reply is then published in Hansard.

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Connor Pearce

Federal Political Reporter at The Canberra Times



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Federal Political Reporter working for The Canberra Times from the parliamentary press gallery. Something to get off your chest? Connor.pearce@austcommunitymedia.com.au

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NEWS

Whale of a tale proves to be fake news

Genevieve Swart

Oct 11 2023



Photo: Amanda De George

Local academics, engineers and politicians have agreed to ‘in principle’ support for an offshore wind zone in the Illawarra. The concept of offshore

wind is also supported globally by all major conservation organisations, including fierce ocean defenders such as Sea Shepherd.

So where is the evidence of the turbines' threat to whales coming from?

Some of it is simply well-written fake news, says Associate Professor Michelle Voyer, of the University of Wollongong's Blue Energy Futures Lab. She suspects AI technology may be involved.

"There was a post put up saying that a University of Tasmania study had done modelling that predicted 400 whales would be killed a year from offshore wind turbines. And that was said to be in the journal *Marine Policy*," Michelle says.

Marine Policy is a well-regarded international journal. The post sounded alarmingly authentic but there was just one problem – Michelle, the Keira Endowed Chair in Energy Futures at UOW, also happens to be an associate editor for *Marine Policy*, and she'd never heard of the paper.

"I straight away got in touch with the editor-in-chief [Professor Quentin Hanich], who's a Thirroul resident. And I said to him, 'Are you aware of this paper? I can't find any evidence of this paper.'

"It was completely fabricated. There was no such paper.

"It was quite a convincingly written post, but there were obviously no citation references or authors or anything. I did wonder – it almost looked like they'd put it into Chat GPT and said, can you make me up a convincing argument about anti [offshore turbines]?"

The Facebook group where the "research" was posted took it down "to their credit", Michelle says.

However, in the age of alternative facts, the damage is done.

"It was [posted] over the long weekend and took a couple of days to become aware of it and a couple days more to get them to take it down. So who knows where that's now circulating out into the world?" Michelle says.

"So that is just mischievous. We don't need that kind of thing inflaming this argument. There's lots for us to discuss – real facts and real issues that we need to work through. There's no denying that. But to be inserting really scary things like that in there, that's just not helpful – and quite distressing."

Another example of 'fake news' doing the rounds on social media is doctored images of the visual impacts of offshore wind farms, Michelle says.

"Some of them are outrageously wrong, others are a little bit closer to the truth. But still probably not particularly helpful."

Ultimately, Michelle says, the turbines will be visible, albeit "tiny and off on the horizon".

"Honestly, it feels a little bit like we're arguing over the colour of the curtains while the house is burning down. There will be visual impact... but I think the conversation we need to be having is yes, we have to make some sacrifices here. And some of those sacrifices are going to be visual amenity. How do we as a community come together and have a discussion around what our terms and conditions are for accepting that?"

One solution would be for the big companies involved to give back to the community, Michelle says.

"Obviously they're going to be making profits out of this. Local communities need a share of those profits."

Driven by a love for the ocean throughout her career, Michelle empathises with people who've spoken of their fears for the whales at recent public forums. She believes it's vital that independent research is done and takes heart from the fact that there are ways to build wind farms that can minimise impacts on whales.

"WWF, Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd, Nature Conservancy, all the major conservation organisations, including those that are solely focused or very heavily focused on whales, all have in principle support for offshore wind, if it's done in a way that can manage interactions.

"Those conservation agencies are saying that the biggest issues that whales face come from plastics and from a warming ocean, which has impacts on their food sources.

"So we can't pretend that by not putting these things [turbines] in the ocean that we're saving the whales. That logic doesn't work. There are impacts of us not doing anything.

"We need to act [on climate change], and we need to do it fast. We're rapidly running out of time."

Fast facts

UOW's Blue Energy Futures Lab has published a list of FAQs about the proposed Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone. Read the [FAQs here](#).

The government has extended its consultation period for the Illawarra's offshore renewable energy zone to November 15. Have your say at consult.dcceew.gov.au/oei-illawarra

Federal Member for Cunningham Alison Byrnes has organised a 'Town Hall' forum on Wednesday, October 11 from 4-8pm at the University of Wollongong. To register, [click here](#).

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OPINION

Could council's latest flood study already be dead in the water?

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