

For Public Notice via Internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978* (REFERRAL NUMBER 2022R-02)

Proponent

Flotation Energy Pty Ltd

Project

Seadragon Offshore Windfarm

Description

The Seadragon Offshore Windfarm Project comprises an offshore wind farm in Commonwealth waters off the coast of Ninety Mile Beach, which will connect into Victoria's electricity network in the Latrobe Valley. The windfarm has an estimated operational life of 60 years, with an anticipated construction and decommissioning period of 3 years each. In Commonwealth waters, project components include up to 150 wind turbine generators in an area of approximately 300 km² and a network of subsea cables. The Victorian jurisdiction is expected to include offshore substation platforms, subsea export cables and a shore crossing and, onshore, up to two substations, underground or overhead transmission cables and a terminal station connection. The capacity of the proposed windfarm is up to approximately 1.5GW.

The Victorian project area is on the land and waters of the Gunaikurnai first nations people, where the onshore and offshore project area is generally centred on Seaspray and Golden Beach/Paradise Beach along the Ninety Mile Beach, with a number of options for landfall, and subsea and terrestrial cable routes still under consideration.

Decision

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the Seadragon Offshore Windfarm Project, specifically the works proposed within Victorian jurisdiction, as described in the referral accepted on 24 February 2022.

Reasons

- The project has the potential for a range of significant and complex effects that require rigorous assessment. In particular, the project as proposed could have significant effects on:
 - i. Threatened terrestrial and aquatic species and communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
 - ii. Ecological values of the area's terrestrial environments, including habitats, ecological communities and native vegetation, particularly within State Parks and nature conservation reserves;
 - iii. Marine and freshwater environments, including Ramsar wetlands;
 - iv. Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values; and
 - v. Landscape and visual amenity.
- There is uncertainty about the extent and magnitude of potential effects related to soils, groundwater, contamination, amenity and socioeconomic values that also require further assessment.

- The project has potential for cumulative adverse effects on local and regional environmental values in the context of other existing and publicly known proposed projects within the region.
- An EES is warranted to enable an integrated and robust assessment of the environmental effects of the project and associated uncertainties, including for feasible relevant alternatives, to inform decision-making for required approvals. The EES will evaluate the effectiveness of proposed mitigation and offsetting measures, including opportunities to avoid or minimise significant adverse effects through alternative layouts and other mitigation measures.

Date

10/14/22