

For Public Notice via Internet

**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*
(REFERRAL NUMBER 2023-R01)**

Proponent

Southern Winds OWP Project Pty Ltd

Project

Southern Winds Offshore Wind Project

Description

The proposed Southern Winds Offshore Wind Project is comprised of an offshore wind farm (in Commonwealth waters) and supporting transmission infrastructure located onshore and offshore, in the south-west of Victoria, near Portland. The referred works cover the onshore and offshore (within Victorian state waters) components of the project including the two subsea export cables, transition joint bays approximately 1 - 2 km inland of the cable landing at the shore, and the connection to the National Energy market from the onshore transition joint bay via an overhead or underground transmission line.

Decision

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the Southern Winds Offshore Wind Project.

Reasons

- The project has the potential for a range of significant and complex effects that require integrated assessment. In particular, the project could have significant effects on:
 - ecological values including threatened terrestrial and aquatic species and communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
 - marine and freshwater environments, including Ramsar wetlands;
 - Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values; and
 - landscape and visual amenity.
- There is uncertainty about the extent and magnitude of these effects, as well as for potential effects related to traffic, soils, groundwater, 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 proposed energy projects (onshore and offshore) within the region.
- An EES is warranted to enable a robust and integrated assessment of the environmental effects of the project, to inform decision-making for a range of required approvals. The EES will evaluate feasible, relevant alternatives, the effectiveness of proposed mitigation and offsetting measures, including opportunities to avoid or minimise potential significant effects through alternative layouts, designs and other mitigation measures.

Date of decision:

5 September 2023