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REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978* (REFERRAL NUMBER 2026-R02)

Proponent

Blue Mackerel North Pty Ltd

Project

Blue Mackerel Offshore Wind Project

Description

The project comprises a one gigawatt (GW) capacity offshore wind farm off the coast of Gippsland south of Giffard and east of Wilsons Promontory and supporting electricity transmission assets required to transfer energy generated by the wind farm to the existing electricity transmission network. The scope of the referral under the Environment Effects Act covers the Victorian section of the project from the 3 nautical mile (NM) limit of Victorian coastal waters to the Giffard area.

The key project components proposed within Victoria include:

- offshore export cables from the 3 NM limit to a shore crossing at McGuarans Beach
- onshore jointing pit which provides the connection between the offshore and onshore cables, and
- transmission cables of between approximately 6 to 10 km in length which will run between the shore crossing to VicGrid's proposed connection hub near Giffard.

Decision

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) **is not required** for the Blue Mackerel Offshore Wind project, as described in the referral accepted on 13 January 2026, **subject to the following conditions:**

- a) A targeted **environment report** for the Blue Mackerel Offshore Wind project needs to be prepared by the proponent, in consultation with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and completed to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The report needs to examine and document the following:
 - i. assessment of the predicted impacts (direct, indirect and cumulative) on biodiversity values (terrestrial, coastal, estuarine and marine) including native vegetation, ecology and habitat for threatened species and other ecological values, including listed communities and species of flora and fauna under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*;
 - ii. alternatives for the location and siting of proposed project infrastructure and works areas, and consideration of appropriate construction methods;
 - iii. the design and mitigation measures proposed to avoid, minimise and/or manage predicted impacts on values examined in the report;
 - iv. mapping that clearly articulates the full extent of project works, as well as values to be avoided (e.g. no-go zones); and

- v. a draft **environmental management framework** that sets out the proposed environmental management commitments to address predicted impacts and how these would be governed through the different approvals required for the project.
- b) The environment report required under condition (a) should be used by the proponent to inform the form of the proposal that is examined through approval processes, where relevant, and the development of relevant management plans.

Reasons

- The Victorian components of the project have the potential for significant adverse effects to biodiversity values within the terrestrial, coastal and marine environments. Various biodiversity matters are related and need assessment to understand the potential effects and their significance, and to inform appropriate design, avoidance and mitigation.
- None of the existing Victorian statutory processes and approvals address the different potential biodiversity effects together, across the terrestrial, coastal and marine environment.
- There are potentially significant adverse effects for water values and for cultural heritage. While there would be benefit in an integrated assessment of these effects together with biodiversity effects, the existing statutory processes, such as under the *Water Act 1989*, *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* can separately examine and address these potentially significant effects.
- Other potential environmental effects of the Victorian components of the project, however, are unlikely to be significant and don't warrant integrated assessment and are readily examined separately through other existing statutory processes and requirements, such as the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, *Heritage Act 2017* and *Environment Protection Act 2017*.
- The conditions set out in this decision for an environment report, provide an appropriate and targeted means for examining potentially significant effects and related uncertainties for various biodiversity values, including the development of adequate measures to avoid and mitigate impacts in the context of relevant policy and regulatory requirements.

Date: 10/07/2026