

9 October 2023

The Hon Chris Bowen MP
Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment & Water
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Sent via email to: minister.bowen@dceew.gov.au

Dear Minister Bowen

RE: Offshore renewable energy infrastructure area proposal: Southern Ocean Region off VIC and SA

The following submission is made by Warrnambool City Council in response to consultation on the proposed offshore renewable energy infrastructure area for the Southern Ocean offshore of Victoria and South Australia which includes the area offshore of Warrnambool, Victoria.

Warrnambool City Council recognises the importance of addressing climate change and that renewable energy is important in the transition to a zero or low carbon economy. However, we have concerns about the visual impact on the landscape, social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed offshore renewable energy zone.

Council submits that the proposed off shore wind zone should not be located in proximity to Warrnambool for the following reasons:

1. Logan's Beach is a recognised whale nursery for the endangered (EPBC Act) Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis* and as such we believe that a precautionary approach should be taken to protect the marine environment.
2. Visual impacts – tourism is a significant component of the economy of Warrnambool. Much of the appeal of Warrnambool is its coastal location, safe beaches and views from locations such as Flagstaff Hill and Logan's Beach. We note that there has been little analysis or information presented in relation to the visual impacts of off shore wind energy to support the proposed zone.
3. Council has previously opposed the use of seismic testing for the exploration of gas and oil. We would request that the seismic testing be prohibited for off shore wind projects in the proposed zone.
4. The experience in South West Victoria with on shore wind farms has been that transmission infrastructure can have significant visual amenity impacts. We believe that all transmission infrastructure must be located underground.

If you have any inquiries concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on (03)5559 4800.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie Arnott", is written over a light blue grid background.

**CR DEBBIE ARNOTT
MAYOR
WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL**