

BUSINESS HUNTER

28 April 2023

Australian Government
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Via portal

**RE: BUSINESS HUNTER RESPONSE TO OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY
INFRASTRUCTURE AREA PROPOSAL: PACIFIC OCEAN OFF HUNTER**

With certainty of energy supply and pricing a chief concern across the Hunter region, Business Hunter is pleased to write in support of the Australian Government's progress toward offshore renewable energy off the Hunter.

As the peak business organisation for the Hunter region, **Business Hunter** is the voice of Australia's largest regional economy, with a membership group spanning more than 4,200 businesses across ten local government areas. We represent the perspectives of member and affiliate businesses across all sectors and all sizes of business, including those involved in energy research & innovation, production and supply. We also represent some of the state's major energy users.

The release of the Offshore renewable energy infrastructure area proposal is one more step toward the elusive goal of certainty in an increasingly uncertain energy marketplace. In short, there is an urgent need for additional large-scale commitments to occur.

With urgency top of mind, Business Hunter advises its support for the Offshore Infrastructure Area. We believe the declared area should be as vast as practical, providing necessary agility in navigating potential constraints emerging through the application and environmental assessment and processes.

Further, Business Hunter encourages the consideration of aspects of the project that can be fast-tracked, such as the project assessment pathway.

We appreciate that in addition to community and business input, there will be a range of federal and state agencies that have some level of jurisdiction or concurrence requirement in relation to the declaration of the area and the development applications that will materialise. It will be important to streamline and focus the processes so that projects can be considered in a timely and consistent manner. Wherever fast track opportunities are available, they should be utilised.

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Working at the intersection of government, business and investment, we are attuned to high levels of commercial interest in locally produced renewable energy and offshore wind projects specifically. We are also aware that as the nation moves towards 2030 and the carbon emissions targets set by government, we will need to have built and commissioned larger scale renewable energy projects of the scale capable with offshore wind generation. There is a strong imperative to convert the project interest to actual projects for the benefit of our region and the nation.

For business, industry and the community, access to stable, reliable, reasonably priced energy is key to ensuring the viability and stability of our economy. As we continue to withdraw from non-renewable energy generation, we invite continued transparency and collaboration from all levels of government and reiterate our ability and willingness to facilitate progress in the new energy economy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further discussion.



Bob Hawes
CEO
Business Hunter