

BlueFloat Energy thanks the community for feedback on the Eastern Rise Offshore Wind Project

BlueFloat Energy, the developer of the Eastern Rise Offshore Wind Project, had more than 100 conversations over two days of community drop-in sessions in the Hunter region, with local people keen to learn more about the project and provide feedback on what is important to them.

The sessions at Salamander Bay, Nelson Bay, Charlestown and Cooks Hill were the first of many engagement sessions planned by BlueFloat Energy to receive feedback for the proposed offshore wind project.

BlueFloat Energy's engagement sessions followed the Commonwealth Government's Hunter offshore wind zone consultation, which received 1900 submissions from the community.

The Eastern Rise Offshore Wind Project is set to be located off the Hunter-Port Stephens coast in New South Wales (NSW), between Newcastle and Nelson Bay. With up to 115 floating wind turbines and three offshore substations, the project will sit approximately 25-45 km off the coast.

It is set to generate enough electricity to power 825,000 homes, the equivalent to almost a quarter of all households in NSW. The project will create hundreds of jobs whilst attracting international investment and growth for the region.

The sessions coincided with the offshore wind developer's forthcoming environmental referrals under the EPBC Act. The purpose of the referrals is to determine whether further assessment is required.

Should the Commonwealth Government declare an offshore wind zone for the Hunter, BlueFloat Energy will apply for a Feasibility Licence. This will allow detailed environmental studies to be undertaken to validate the suitability of the location and inform project layout and design.

Nick Sankey, BlueFloat Energy's Australian Country Manager, said:

"It was important for us to gather local feedback on how we can co-exist with other activities and industries including fishing, tourism and shipping. We heard that whilst the transition to renewable energy is generally supported, the community wants a focus on studying the potential impact of the Project on the marine environment, particularly migratory whales and birds. These studies and related analysis will be undertaken during the environmental assessment phase of the Project.

"Whilst the Project is currently in the pre-feasibility stage, with applications for licenses expected to be open in mid-2023, BlueFloat Energy has emphasised that engagement is crucial and more community sessions will be held in the Hunter region.

"We want to create lasting benefits for the Hunter and Port Stephens region through the delivery of our Project. Our recent community engagement sessions represent just the start of our community consultation over several years as the project goes through design and approvals phases."

Kate Lancaster, Stakeholder and Engagement Manager, commented:

"We're grateful to those people who dropped in and travelled to come and see us at our sessions. We are at the very start of the process, and there will be plenty more opportunities, both formal and

informal, for the community to share their views. We also appreciate the community sharing how they would like to receive news of upcoming sessions and how they would like to be informed during the process.”

To find out more and to sign up for regular updates via our website:
<https://www.easternriseowp.com.au/>

Notes to editors

BlueFloat Energy will make three environmental referrals – one for the main Project, one for initial marine investigations and one for geotechnical and geophysical investigations. The community is invited to feedback on these proposals as part of the public consultation period online and through the community engagement sessions.