



**Newcastle Offshore Wind
Energy Pty Ltd**

PO Box 3009
Merewether
NSW 2291
Australia

Mob e: +61 [REDACTED]
Ema [REDACTED]

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

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Subject: Offshore Electricity Infrastructure (Regulatory Levies) Bill 2021 and Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Bill 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission on the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Bill 2021.

The Newcastle Offshore Wind Energy (NOW-E) project has been in development for over 10 years. Originally conceived as a 32MW nearshore project in 2010 and designed to supply consumers within the Port of Newcastle, the project proposes up to 10GW of offshore wind energy generation located adjacent to the continental shelf in Commonwealth Waters approximately 20km offshore, utilising floating foundation technology.

The NOW-E Project Team is forging ahead with the project development, and has been engaging with local stakeholders, community and investors. The project timeline has been scheduled to incorporate near-term, medium term and long term goals, which align with the gradual close-down of the incumbent coal-fired power stations in the Hunter Valley and the transition to a clean energy future.

The NOW-E Project Team welcomes the introduction of legislation designed to establish a regulatory framework for the development of offshore renewable energy in Commonwealth waters.

- **The Regulator**

We support the establishment of the Offshore Infrastructure Registrar, however we question whether the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority is the appropriate body to act on behalf of the clean energy industry.

- **Zoning of Marine Space**

Zoning and mapping of appropriate offshore areas for renewable energy development should be allocated to streamline the development pathway and provide certainty to projects in specific locations ie dedicated offshore Renewable Energy Zones (REZs). This would help to protect important marine resources, activities and locations.



- **Offshore Renewable Energy Targets**

The establishment of offshore renewable energy targets has proven effective in other countries for developing a viable and sustainable offshore wind industry. These targets should be delivered in line with retiring fossil fuel plant and or growth of new industries such as green hydrogen, to facilitate a just and sustainable transition to renewables. These targets should also be considered in line with our global commitments to emission reduction targets.

- **Licencing of Areas**

Licencing of suitable areas should be considered in light of multiple benefits to the community, not just based on the financial offers to the government.

- **Merit Criteria for Feasibility and Commercial Licence**

Merits criteria for licences should include experience, capability, as well as commitment to the local community and local stakeholders, environment and social benefit.

- **Financial Support for Projects**

There is a case for the federal government to actively support this industry through mechanisms such as reverse auctions and contracts for difference. Providing certainty of offtake through power purchase agreements for federal energy will encourage the development of industry and fast-track projects of value.

- **Infrastructure Licences**

The Federal Government needs to provide support to projects through the facilitation of the transmission connection processes, perhaps through the appointment of a “offshore renewable energy advocate”, which has been a successful model in NSW for onshore projects.

- **Hydrogen**

Offshore energy has the capability to support and deliver a component of the new hydrogen economy, and could assist the National Hydrogen Strategy in achieving its objectives.

We trust that this information is of benefit to the development of the Offshore Energy Infrastructure Bills and welcome the request for further information if required.

We look forward to your response in due course.

Yours sincerely



Dr Richard Finlay-Jones
Director