

## South Gippsland removed from offshore wind zone after community concerns

ABC Gippsland / By [Natasha Schapova](#)

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The team behind an offshore wind project in Gippsland waters hope to generate electricity by 2029.

South Gippsland residents have welcomed a new zone earmarked for offshore wind in the Bass Strait, which now excludes waters west of Wilsons Promontory.

Energy Minister Chris Bowen was in Seaspray today to declare Gippsland as Australia's first offshore wind zone.

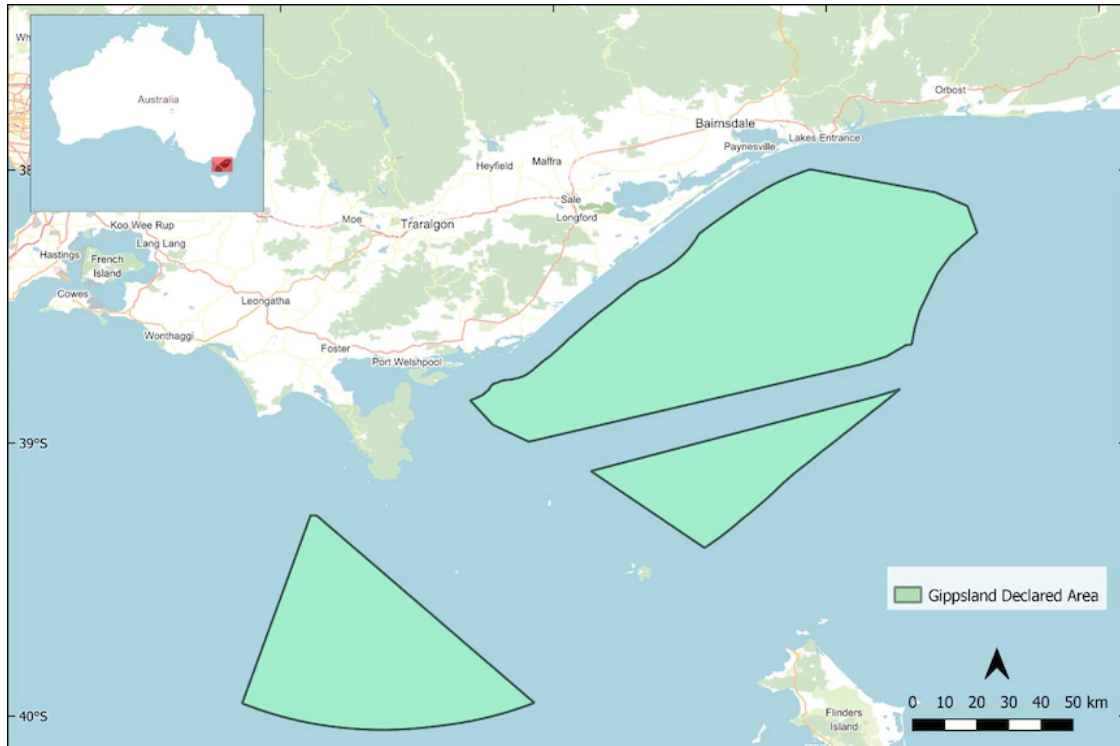
Mr Bowen also confirmed new parameters to a zone previously proposed in the consultation period.

South Gippsland has been removed from the region's offshore wind zone, which now spans from south-east of Wilson's Promontory to Orbost.

### Key points:

- The new zone excludes South Gippsland, east of Wilsons Promontory
- Chris Bowen says community and environmental concerns sparked the change
- East of Wilsons Promontory, turbines must be placed at least 10 kilometres

Turbines can only be placed a minimum of 10 kilometres from the shore between Port Albert and Orbest, instead of the 5 kilometres that was previously declared.



The new offshore wind zone excludes South Gippsland. *(Supplied)*

"I am declaring the area east of Wilsons Promontory, not the area west of Wilsons Promontory in response to community concerns, environmental concerns and feedback," Mr Bowen said.

"The area did not receive the same level of community support as the proposal east and there's also environmental concerns with the famous orange-bellied parrot which need to be worked through."

## Potential for changes

But Mr Bowen did not rule out the potential for South Gippsland to be reinstated in the plan.

"I look forward to working with Lily D'Ambrosio and the Victorian government to further consider that area west of Wilsons Promontory over the coming 12 months to see if those community concerns can be dealt with and environmental concerns can be dealt with," he said.

He said it was a major milestone in delivering 2 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2032.

He said the target was to increase that to 4 gigawatts by 2035 and deliver 9 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2040.



Chris Bowen (second from right) says the plan will ensure jobs in Gippsland into the future. *(ABC Gippsland: Natasha Schapova)*

The Victorian government has set the same targets.

Waratah Bay resident Robert Boelen co-founded community organisation Responsible Renewables with to push against wind turbines in waters near South Gippsland.

He had been calling for wind turbines to be placed further away from the shore than the initially-proposed 6 kilometres.

He said the outcome exceeded his expectations.

"It won't intrude on the Prom, the other new part is still far, far away enough from the Prom," he said.

"It doesn't include Corner Inlet or Snake Island and any of those, it's still far enough away to be virtually non-intrusive as far as the Prom is concerned."

## **Moving plans forward**

Star of the South chief executive Charles Rattray, whose company is behind Australia's first and most advanced offshore wind project, said the announcement allowed more certainty.

"It's a really exciting day for us, we've been working on this project for six years and this just enables us to go into the next part of the project," he said.

Mr Rattray says Star of the South is studying birds and sea mammals to understand their behaviour. *(ABC Gippsland: Natasha Schapova)*

Mr Rattray said some changes would need to be made to the project in response to the altered zone but it would not affect its timeline.

"We're expecting to reach financial close or a final investment decision in 2025-2026 and start construction about two years after that," he said.

"We are expecting our first power by 2029 or 2030."

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