

**2 February 2024**

### **An offshore wind industry for the Hunter**

The region's peak business organisation, **Business Hunter** will join a broad group of union and community organisations in support of progressing investigations and consideration for establishing an offshore wind energy industry in the Hunter Region.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes said the event, scheduled this Sunday 4 February, was an opportunity for information exchange and awareness.

"Our community and our country is navigating the opportunities and challenges of generating large scale renewable energy from offshore wind projects for the first time."

"We're going to confront issues we have not experienced before. It's absolutely essential that we address concerns carefully. It's also absolutely essential that we research, document and understand in more detail the specifics of offshore wind to understand the scope and focus of concerns before we rule out offshore wind energy on any basis," said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes said large-scale renewable energy generation projects were critical for our energy evolution, and offshore wind could be an extremely important part of the mix.

"What's at risk here, is if we cannot offer business and industry reliable and affordable power into the future, jobs and communities will suffer," said Mr Hawes.

"There's no question we are currently a long way off the pace, with traditional energy generation assets retiring well before renewables arrive at scale to replace them."

"NSW hasn't approved a new wind farm since May 2021. The market volatility this creates wreaks havoc on pricing and investment decisions, placing terrible pressure on businesses and households. We have seen too much evidence of this in the last two years."

Mr Hawes said there was a long way to go before any work started on any part of an offshore renewable wind project, let alone commissioning and operating a plant.

"The opportunity for detailed consultation with the entire community has not been lost and we must get a balance between the need to move forward on the process to investigate and understand the parameters of these projects and program meaningful consultation at the appropriate time."

“As we move into 2024 and once the Commonwealth government issues feasibility licences, we’ll begin to learn more and commence the process of detailed investigation. This will offer a clearer picture to inform community conversations and feedback.”

“In the meantime, offshore wind proponent businesses are currently investing time, effort, and money in responding in good faith responded to an invitation extended by the Australian Government and it doesn’t make a lot of sense to halt this process now, particularly on the basis of speculative assessment of what the projects are and what the impacts might be.”

“We’d hope, and encourage both sides of government to work together to ensure we reach the point where business and the community have greater clarity on what is ahead and on which meaningful and constructive consultation and feedback can be based.”

**Event Details:**

Date – Sunday 2 February 2024

Location – Railway Sheds, Newcastle East

Time – 11am-2pm

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