

DCCEEW Summary report of Submissions Released June 2024



Offshore Renewable Energy Declaration

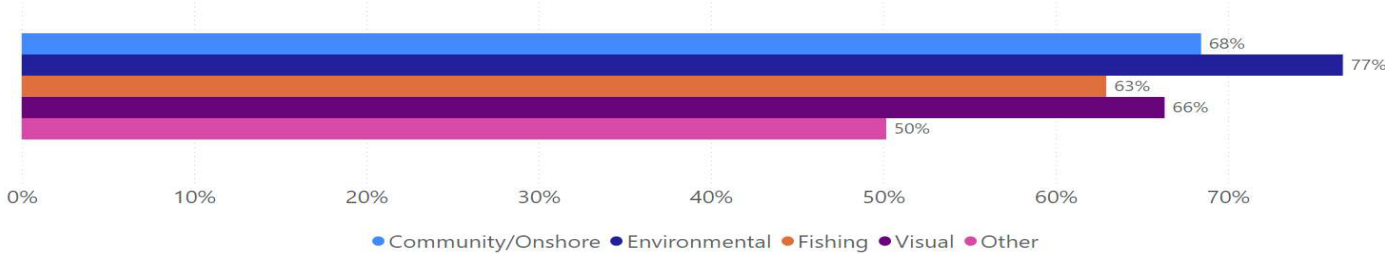
Pacific Ocean off the Illawarra region, New South Wales

Public Consultation Summary Report

June 2024

Key outcomes

- **Submission period:** 14 Aug – 15 Nov 23 (94 days vs 60)
- **14,211** submissions received
 - 14,041 from individuals: 74% local residents, 11% regular visitors
 - 53 or 170 (TBC) from organisations
- **65% 'Opposed' or 'Opposed with specific/other concerns'**

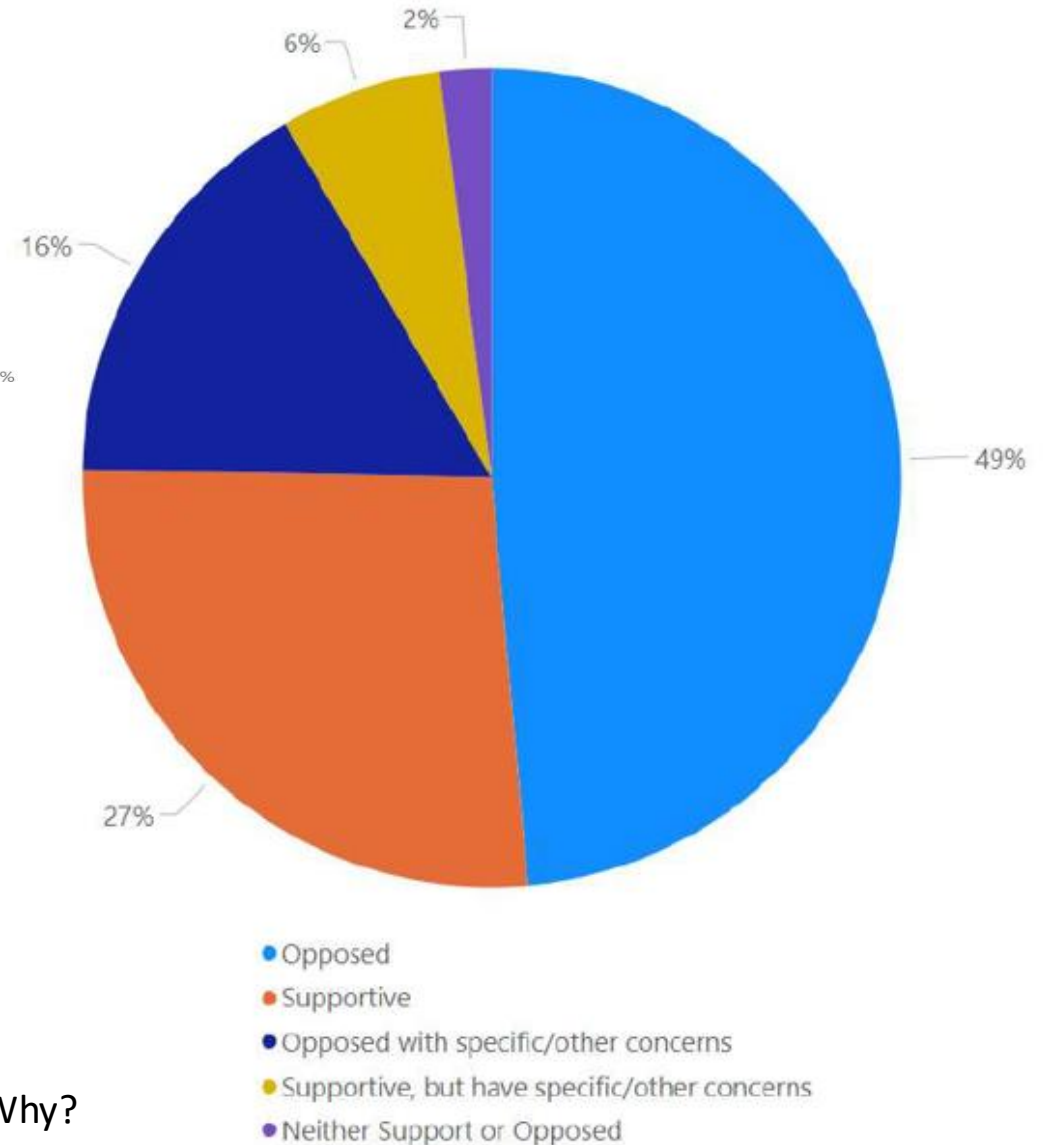


- **Individual submissions:**

- 55% Wollongong LGA
- 11% Shellharbour LGA
- 4% Kiama LGA
- 4% Shoalhaven LGA
- 26% NSW - Other, Australia – Other, Outside Australia

- **Organisation submissions:**

- 40 supportive vs 11 against
- Illawarra the only report where organisations & # of members listed. Why?



Questions & Concerns

1. Unsubstantiated claims re factors limiting validity of results

“... the department is aware there are multiple factors that have limited the validity of these statistics. These factors include:

- *Submissions made using non-valid emails addresses*
- *Multiple submissions made from the same person(s), and financial inducements offered for submissions*
- *Submissions possibly generated by artificial intelligence (AI) software.” (p.5)*
- **Does not explain or provide evidence** re extent to which factors:-
 - Exist
 - Impacted the ‘for’ and ‘opposed’ statistics i.e. evenly or was one position impacted more?
- **Does not define** *“non-valid email addresses”* or note number or nature of submissions implicated



Questions & Concerns

1. Unsubstantiated claims limiting validity of results (cont'd)

- Re “*multiple submissions were made from the same person(s)*”:-
 - Does not explain how this was determined or number of submissions
 - Disregards written permission given by DCCEEW on 16 Oct 23 to make more than one submission
- Re “*financial inducements being offered for submissions*”:
 - No evidence of financial inducements, or of number or nature of submissions impacted
 - Same unsubstantiated allegation made re E-petition EN5444 which gathered 11,291 signatures.
- Re “*submissions **possibly** generated by AI*”: Undefined, no evidence of number or nature of submissions impacted
- **Majority of these factors – if they existed - could & should have been prevented or mitigated by protections built into the submission platform & clear directions from DCCEEW**
- **Fourth time platform used, so why weren't these issues identified & prevented/mitigated prior? And why is this the first time it's been raised in a report?**



Questions & Concerns

2. Representativeness sample of the population

*“While the majority of those who made submissions stated they were opposed to the proposal, it should be noted that these submissions **are not a representative sample** of the population.” (P.8)*

- What do they mean by a ‘*representative sample*’? Do they mean a representative sample of the combined population of Wollongong, Shellharbour & Kiama LGAs N=314,000 (ABS 2021)? Or a representative sample of everyone who cares &/or is impacted?
- Eg. To obtain submissions from a ‘representative sample’ of the combined population of these LGAs:-
 - DCCEEW should have *proportionally* chosen individuals & organisations from each LGA to obtain a *specific number of responses* (i.e. ~4100) to ensure the results were statistically valid & could be relied upon with a high degree of confidence to be representative of the population
 - Everyone across these LGAs would have known about the proposal. What is the response bias from non-responses?
 - Everyone able to make a submission. CALD, elderly, vulnerable were excluded
 - Respondents randomly selected rather than rely on those with views to submit



Questions & Concerns

- **Illawarra report:** only report where submissions *not being a representative sample of the population* mentioned, even where the % of submissions based on the population were significantly lower than in the Illawarra i.e.
 - Hunter: 1,916 submissions: Population: 174,420 = ~ 1% of population
 - Gippsland: 765, population: 154,357 ~ = 0.4% of population
 - Illawarra: 14,211 submissions, Population 314,000 = ~ 4.5% of population
 - **How do we know they are not representative?** i.e. there is a high level of statistical confidence that these submissions *are* representative of the population across the 3 LGAs, even considering those who didn't know about it or couldn't access platform
 - i.e. for a population of 314,000, needed 4,091 submissions to be 99% confident that views in submissions are representative of the population, give or take 2% either way.
- We had 9,948 responses from residents across these 3 LGAs! More than double needed!**

Sample size calculator

Confidence Level:

99% ▾

Population Size:

314000

Margin of Error:

2% ▾

Ideal Sample Size:

4091

Questions & Concerns

Page 7: ... the Minister “*considered material that resembled submissions was posted to the department, or emailed to the Minister directly, constituted relevant material. In total 12 responses were received that were considered under subsection 19(2). These responses were not considered in the wider analysis reported below, however **the benefits and concerns identified were consistent with the analysis of formal submissions received via the consultation portal.***”

Question: If these submissions that were not received by the portal were consistent with those that came from the portal, does this not give credibility to the validity & representativeness of those from the portal?



Questions & Concerns

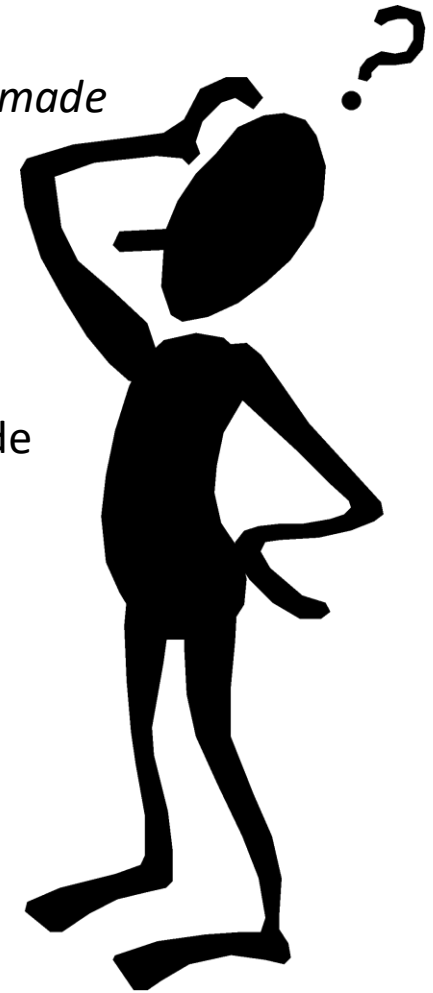
3. Confusing data re Submissions from organisations

- “170 (1.2%) were made on behalf of an organization” (p.5) vs “approximately 53 submissions were made by organisations” (pp. 7 & 25)
- Only 51 organisations are listed in the Appendix
 - 40 supportive vs 11 opposed
 - Supportive: 5 unions, 5+ politically affiliated
- Is it possible that if 170 submissions were made but only 53 organisations are listed, that some made multiple submissions?

4. Missing Data/poor quality control

Concerns regarding offshore wind for the region

Many submissions noted concerns and discussed those who are currently using this marine area. **Error!** **Reference source not found.** shows the percentage of submissions that identified concerns and existing marine users across the main themes of community, local economy, transmission, environmental, fishing and visual amenity.



Summary

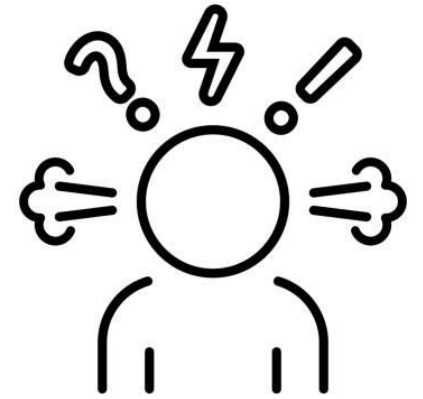
1. **DCCEEW has not adequately defined, substantiated, or explained** the factors that “*limited the validity of the statistics*” including the number or nature of submissions impacted

2. **DCCEEW implemented consultation & submission processes that:-**

- Used a platform that **did not mitigate the foreseeable & avoidable** risks from factors it claims “limited the validity of the statistics”
- Were **not ‘fit for purpose’** if they needed a representative sample of the population
- Provided the general public with **contradictory information** regarding the number of submissions allowed

3. DCCEEW applied a test of validity **after the fact** by requiring that the submissions be a “*representative sample of the population*” if they were to be considered valid. i.e. Changed the goal-posts!

4. DCCEEW only noted these ‘factors that limited the validity of results’ in the Illawarra report - its **fourth report** & the result of its **fourth consultation & submission process** using this same approach.



Concerns

4. 'Benefits' quoted in report

"There are substantial prospects for NSW to lead the advancements in areas such as floating foundations, mooring and anchoring systems, welding automation and robotics, and advanced materials suitable for marine environments." (Blue Energy Futures Lab, University of Wollongong, #4454)

AKA – Will we be a giant experiment?

"Offshore wind farms especially those in regional areas such as the Illawarra and Newcastle will create jobs and attract people to live and work in those areas. This will in turn boost the local economies of those areas, creating further opportunities locally." (Submission #8456)

- Rubbery figures re jobs e.g. BlueFloat 200-300, DCCEEW 2,500 during construction & 1,250 ongoing based on multiplying the job estimates for Victoria by 4.2 because Victoria will produce 1GW while the Illawarra could generate 4.2GW.
- What about the 14,020 jobs linked to tourism across 3 LGAs + 70+ commercial fishers jobs threatened?

"Potential benefits for fisherman if exclusion zones around turbines are minimised or not declared at all. Structures represent significant fish aggregating devices if near access is allowed to recreational fishing." (Submission #7042)

- Exclusion zones are required, have changed from 400-500m² around each turbines to 50m² (?). Are these temporary or permanent?
- Commercial fishers will be excluded as unable to trawl
- Unclear if it is possible for recreational fishers to access due to AMSA requirements
- The OEI Act allows the Regulator to declare 2 types of temporary zones to protect against interference with offshore renewable energy infrastructure or offshore electricity transmission infrastructure, associated structures or vessels, equipment on associated structures or vessels, or activities being carried out on, by or in connection with structures or vessels.
- The zones are:
 - safety zones – the Regulator may, by notifiable instrument, declare a safety zone of up to 500 meters around eligible safety zone infrastructure^[36]
 - protection zones – the Regulator may, by legislative instrument, determine that a specified area in the Commonwealth offshore area is a protection zone.^[37]

Call to Action

1. Senate Inquiry into Offshore Wind based on:-
 - Quality of consultation & submission processes & questions around validity of results: Not met
 - Risks to environment & attempts to bypass requirements for local assessment
2. Contact politicians –
 - Federal representatives and the Opposition (including Ted O'Brien Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy) to express your concerns
3. Talk to others about how the Labor government have discounted the voice of the community