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**BUSINESS
HUNTER**

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 6th October 2023

Comments from *Hunter Workers*, *Hunter Jobs Alliance*, and *Business Hunter* regarding tomorrow's Anti-Offshore Wind rally:

Organisations representing workers, environmental groups, businesses, and communities have reaffirmed their support for Hunter offshore wind power and addressed the misinformation campaign against wind power spearheaded by disingenuous actors.

Hunter Jobs Alliance, and the four local environmental groups they represent, affirm they staunchly support the proposed project and reject the unsubstantiated and entirely misleading claims regarding wind turbine impacts on the environment.

Business Hunter, representing over 4,000 member and affiliate businesses from across the Hunter, has long supported and advocated for growth and development of the new energy economy in the Hunter, recognising that offshore wind represents a significant component of the renewable energy future.

Hunter Workers

Leigh Shears, Hunter Workers Secretary

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“Hunter Workers firmly supports the proposed Hunter Offshore Wind project and welcomes the extensive benefits and opportunities wind power industry would create for the Hunter region economy.

We know that overwhelmingly, the 64,000 plus workers we represent from 24 Unions across the Hunter region support the proposed project, which is reflected in the results of extensive community consultation undertaken this year.

With the right planning, technology, and investment, offshore wind can power our future and enrich our local communities without harming the planet or our local environment.

The proposed development can create more than 4,000 quality, secure jobs to Hunter workers, power 4.2 million homes, and contribute to a sizeable reduction in Australia's carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, disingenuous actors are working hard to spread extensive misinformation to further their own agendas, understandably causing concern among some community members.

We condemn the dishonesty of these actors and implore the community to seek information from a range of credible, trusted sources.”

Hunter Jobs Alliance (HJA)

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“HJA has been advocating to see offshore wind proponents take a proactive approach to environmental and threatened species impact avoidance technologies from the outset. Where planning frameworks lack or are lagging, proponents must fill the gap to assure the public and the Hunter and Central Coast community that marine, estuarine, and avian species populations will continue to thrive alongside an offshore wind industry.

Offshore Wind will create great opportunities to create permanent secure, quality union jobs, local apprenticeships, training & transition opportunities for energy workers, maximise Australian manufacturing for offshore wind, including wind turbine components, floating structures cables, and vessels, maximise local supply chains, provide benefits for First Nations people & use regulated Australian Vessels and Australian crew.

Offshore Wind will generate significant investment and we need to seize the opportunity to maximise local content.

HJA supports growth and investment in renewable energy in the Hunter including offshore wind. With the right Government Policy and Framework settings we have the opportunity to maximise local content, mitigate environmental impacts & provide community benefits to the Hunter region.”

Business Hunter

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“There is a long way to go before any work starts on any part of an offshore renewable project let alone commissioning and operating a plant. The opportunity for detailed consultation has not been lost and we must get a balance between the need to move forward on the process for these projects and meaningful consultation at the appropriate time.

Large-scale renewables are critical for our energy evolution and offshore wind is an important part of the mix. There’s no question we are currently a long way off the pace, with traditional assets retiring well before renewables arrive to replace them. The market volatility this creates wreaks havoc on pricing and investment decisions, placing terrible pressure on businesses and households.”

Our community and our country is navigating the opportunities and challenges of offshore wind for the first time. We need to address these concerns carefully. We understand more detail on the specifics of proposed projects will emerge after November and into 2024, offering 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 to an invitation extended by the Australian Government and it doesn’t make a lot of sense to halt this process. 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 on which meaningful and constructive feedback can be based.”

END
