

# WINDS of CHANGE

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Page 5 | Section: NEWS

546cm on the page



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## Hundreds of jobs, power in \$1.75bn offshore project

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A \$1.75BN offshore wind farm is planned for the South-East – the first in South Australia – with proponents spruiking its potential to create hundreds of jobs and provide power to 400,000 homes.

SA Offshore Windfarm Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of British-based Australis Energy, is planning the project, with up to 75 turbines, about 10km off the coast of Kingston SE.

There are no offshore wind farms operating in Australia but 11 others are in the planning stages.

Australis Energy says the 600 megawatt wind farm would require 40-75 turbines measuring up to 260m high, and the number to be built would depend on the type of technology used.

Visible from the coast, they would use submerged cables and offshore and on-

shore substations to feed electricity into the state's power grid within the National Electricity Market.

If approved, the company says up to 800 jobs would be created during construction and 100 people would find long-term work.

The company has lodged a development application with the State Planning Commission, and the federal Environment Department is considering whether to deem the project a "controlled action" likely to have significant environmental impact.

This would require assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Australis Energy is also planning two other offshore wind farms – in Victoria and Western Australia.

It says detailed design and procurement would happen

in 2023, and construction begin as early as 2024-25 and commissioning by 2027.

Kingston Mayor Kay Rasheed said if the project eventuated, its employment generation would be "absolutely fantastic".

"I think it could be quite a tourist attraction," she said.

Council chief executive Nat Traeger said apart from its economic boost, she hoped the project would help cater

for boat-launching upgrades. A boat ramp in Kingston SE has been closed for two years because it has a \$7.6m repair bill – but the council earns only \$3.9m in a year in rate revenue.

Australis Energy chairman Mark Petterson said the project would support the state government's target of reaching net-100 per cent renewables by 2030.

Andrew Bray, national director of RE-Alliance – an organisation supporting the country's transition to renewables – said that of the country's 12 potential offshore wind farms, the Star of the South, near Victoria's Gippsland, was the most progressed through planning stages.

"You would expect that some of them are going to make it and some won't," he said.

Mr Bray said the technology was common in Europe, accessing high wind speeds and harnessing energy when speeds were low on land.

A "scoping report" on the project said the wind turbine generators would be supported by monopiles – cylindrical tubes up to 10m in diameter, driven into the seabed.

Most of the site is in water of 40m to 84m deep.



An offshore wind farm is planned for 10km off Kingston SE, which could be similar in scope to this one on the North Sea. Pictures: AFP

