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Committee Secretary

30th July 2024

Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications

PO Box 6100

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Worimi LALC Submission to the Inquiry – Offshore Wind Industry consultation process

The Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) supports the Senate Inquiry into the ‘Offshore Wind Industry’ consultation process; highlighting that communications to date, from the Labour Government have been extremely poor, especially when considering the NSW commitment to the ‘Closing the Gap’ initiatives.

The Worimi community are interested to learn more about the industry however; have concerns for how the Hunter Offshore Wind industry (in Worimi Waters) will impact our lives and more importantly the environmental impact imposed on marine life (including migratory birds etc).

Recent correspondence from Minister Bowen; seeking a response to approve a ‘future act’ in accordance with the Native Title Act and necessary to issue a ‘feasibility study’ (to one of the eight license applicants) is not proper, open and transparent engagement with Worimi people and/or other Aboriginal persons and communities that have a connection to the East Coast.

There has been no discussion to outline the benefits of the wind farming industry for the Aboriginal Community; nor has there been any discussion/s on the potential impact to:

- Marine life, marine environments and migratory birds;
- Future Native Title claims, the Worimi Conservation Lands and/or Worimi LALC private freehold lands and lands under claim (cabling connectivity has to come onshore somewhere?);
- The cultural significance, connections and impact to Worimi waterways, including (not limited to) Broughton Island and Cabbage Tree Islands, Yacaaba and the Tomaree Headlands and Dark Point etc; &
- Cultural significance and spiritual connections (including celestial sites)

Additionally; the closest point of the declared area to the mainland is Port Stephens (not Newcastle), so calling it the Novocastrian Wind Farm is deliberately misleading.

Until there is appropriate communication and sufficient information provided, there cannot be free, prior and informed comment or consent from the Worimi community for this offshore wind industry.

Yours sincerely,

Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council

Mr. Andrew Smith
Chief Executive Officer