



National Environmental Science Program

Offshore wind farm environmental research

Welcome to the March 2026 *Marine and Coastal Hub offshore wind farm environmental research update*. This issue features the Offshore Renewable Energy Research Consultative Group, the 2026 Shared Horizons workshop, and hub and industry updates.

Introducing the Offshore Renewable Energy Research Consultative Group

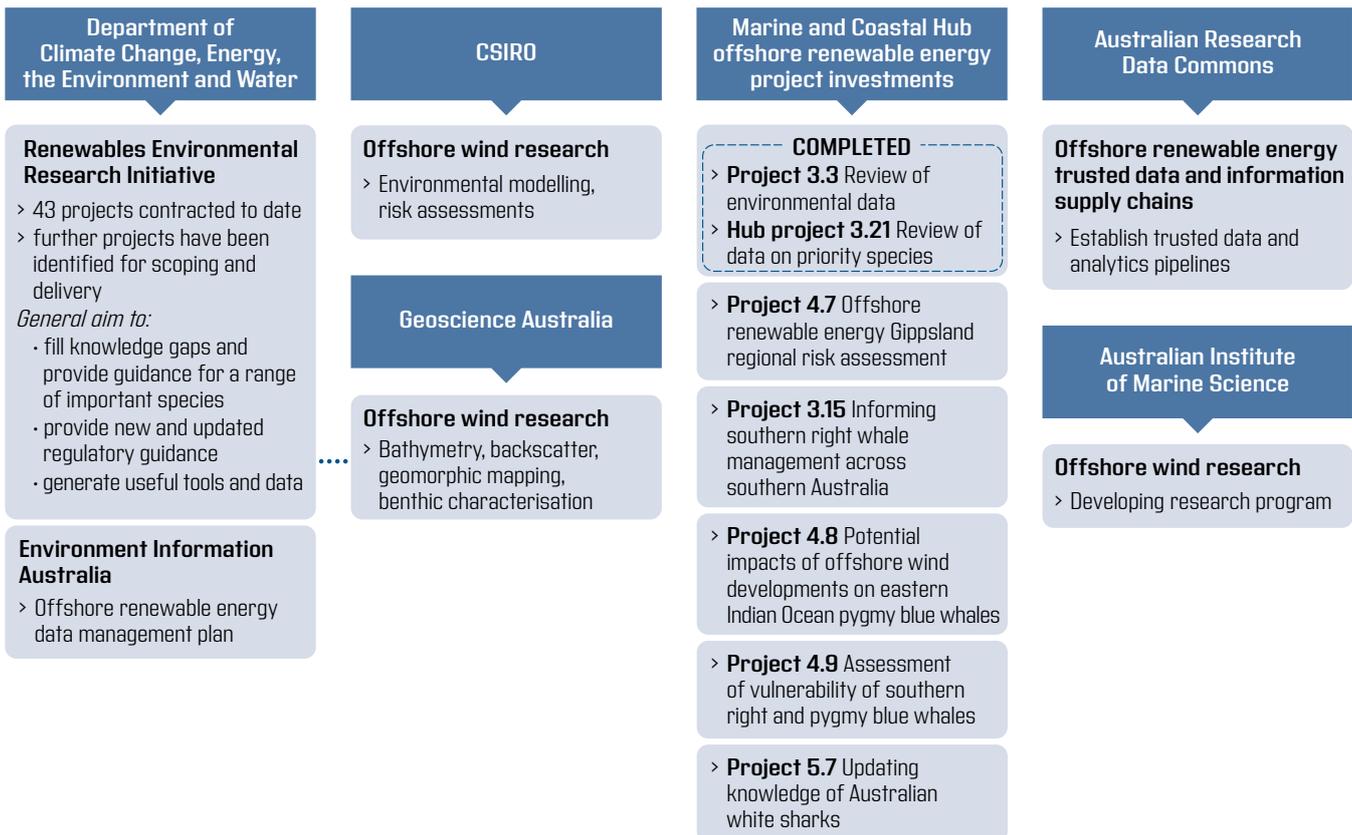
Several environmental research programs aim to support Australia’s offshore renewable energy industry. Many are led or funded by Commonwealth government agencies. Coordination is critical to maximise synergies and avoid duplication. The Offshore Renewable Energy Research Consultative Group was formed in September 2025 to meet this need.

The group is co-managed by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and the National Environmental Science Program Marine and Coastal Hub. It provides a consultative mechanism to ensure government environmental research relating to offshore renewable energy are coordinated and relevant areas are engaged in developments. It also provides a forum for sharing project updates, early insight from draft deliverables, engagement outcomes, and developments on cross-cutting issues such as data management and delivery.

Department of
Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

National Environmental
Science Program
Marine and Coastal Hub

Offshore Renewable Energy Research Consultative Group



Communicating cumulative risk: Marine and Coastal Hub Project 4.7 update

After a well-earned holiday break, the [Project 4.7](#) team returned to their cumulative risk assessment and hosted the fourth Program Advisory Group meeting in February. Information presented by the project team covered:

- data acquisition and processing completed to date;
- completion of the baseline (2017 to 2024) oceanographic and biogeochemical modelling;
- initial results from the relative distribution and migration models for terrestrial shorebirds;
- the tiered modelling strategy for relative distribution and population dynamics of seabirds and cetaceans;
- outcomes from the soundscape analysis and progress on the noise propagation modelling; and
- completion of the commercial shipping and commercial fishing data re-analysis.

Australian offshore wind energy happenings

Australia's offshore wind industry has reached a few more milestones in the past few months.

- [Final feasibility licenses](#) were offered in January to three projects off the coast of Western Australia in the Bunbury offshore wind zone.
- Applications are open via the DCCEE website for [research and demonstration licenses](#) in all offshore wind zones, allowing new offshore renewable energy technologies to be tested in Australian waters.
- The Victorian state government announced that the [first auction for offshore wind farms in Australia](#) will be held in August 2026.

Shared Horizons workshop steers toward data products for all

The Shared Horizons naarm/Melbourne workshop in February was led by the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) ORE Trusted Environmental Data and Information Supply Chains project. The two-day event brought together more than 50 representatives from industry, government and research. Its overarching aim was to ensure that environmental information products being developed for the Gippsland offshore renewable energy (ORE) zone are fit-for-purpose, accessible and tailored to industry and government needs.

The workshop began with information sessions on ARDC, Marine and Coastal Hub and Renewables Environmental Research Initiative projects, and state and Commonwealth government programs. Subsequent activities gathered information on data product priorities and design, data and information sharing, data governance and policy, data infrastructure sustainability and data architecture.

A workshop report will synthesise learnings from this and the previous (2025) workshop to support data governance, sharing and products for ORE in the Gippsland ORE zone. Scalability to other zones will be a core focus.

For more information and to join the project update list, email peter.walsh@utas.edu.au



Top: Marine and Coastal Hub co-leader Alan Jordan addresses the 2026 Shared Horizons workshop.

Above: Peter Walsh of University of Tasmania presents the workshop objectives.



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