



/ Gippsland Water

Dutson Downs Community Engagement

Insights report

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Executive summary

The community is strongly in favour of Gippsland Water progressing with a wind farm at Dutson Downs.

We know this because the organisation has delivered an uncommonly authentic community engagement process to gather community sentiment, and received a resounding 2-1 endorsement of the project.

This is an important finding, as the move to renewable energy is a key part of Gippsland Water's ability to meet its ambitious energy targets.

Think HQ partnered to deliver the engagement, which did something very few organisations achieve, honestly asking for community input before making a decision. Communities - with a big focus on the local families who stop to be most impacted, were given the rationale and modelling behind the project, but not led to a conclusion either way.

This is not an easy path. Consult too late? Communities lose trust that you value their opinion. Consult too early? They question the lack of available information. That's valuable context in understanding the results reported here. Support is overwhelmingly strong, and much of the questions and concerns raised are around wanting more detail. That makes sense, because the details are mindfully not there yet.

People, generally speaking, sought more information on the project's financial implications and impacts, and want to see evidence that Gippsland Water is actively considering and managing any concerns.

Residents are enthusiastic at the environmental benefits they can be a part of through the project, and are hopeful to realise financial savings,

Gippsland Water can, hand on heart, progress with this project with the support of the community, and benefit from a clear path to action that will build trust, rather than expend it, giving a much higher chance for success.

Background and context

Gippsland Water is considering a wind farm on the property it manages at Dutson Downs to help meet its renewable energy targets in a way that could benefit its customers. The shift to renewable energy is part of a mandate set by the Victorian Government and an associated commitment made by Gippsland Water to reduce its carbon emissions and continue to operate sustainably.

This is just one way Gippsland Water might meet its renewable energy targets. While limited resources have been used to assess the project's high-level feasibility, Gippsland Water were driven to engage their community early on, to understand their views and sentiments towards the idea.

Building trust and respect through community involvement at the 'ground floor'.

The pros and cons of community engagement at this very early stage were considered before deciding that it was ultimately in the best interests of the community and for Gippsland Water.

The main drawback of engaging early is that there are few details that can be provided, with no decisions having been made yet. For instance, we don't yet know how many wind turbines would be built, or their size, where they would be sourced, how much they would cost, the extent of their positive environmental benefits, as well as any financial benefits for customers and for Gippsland Water, and so on. In the absence of details, there is always a risk of scepticism and misunderstanding. In this case, the community may feel that they cannot adequately understand the complexities of what they're being asked to consider supporting, and they may default to 'opposition'. Without fact-based details, the community may also be led by mis-information from other sources.

Yet engaging with the community at this early stage has many benefits. It means bringing the community along for the whole journey, starting before the details are figured out. It can support a strong and trusting relationship between Gippsland Water and the local communities through transparent dialogue. It means that if the project goes ahead, their views gathered from early engagement activities can directly inform its foundation, right from the beginning. Early engagement lets the community be involved in decisions that may directly impact them. If the community is strongly against the project, it's best to know as soon as possible so that minimal resources will have been used. And if the community supports the project, they can work with Gippsland Water to maximise community benefits, address any concerns they might have, and provide information that the community needs.

Considering the community context.

As part of this engagement, it is important to consider the context within which it is taking place. The ongoing closures of coal fired power stations in the region, as well as continued exploration of renewable forms of energy (including a different, highly publicised offshore wind farm in the region), could mean greater interest in potential projects like this in Gippsland.

This context, combined with the perception of some locals that the potential site has been a 'dumping ground' for the state, means this is an emotive topic for the community. As such, it was even more important for Gippsland Water to engage early and demonstrate to its customers and the local community that they are central in the decision-making process.

Engaging successfully with the community.

Efforts to engage early were successful, with good attendance at the focus groups and uptake of the survey. Gippsland Water also chose to listen openly and not engage in debates, with consistent messaging that a decision had not been made. The messaging further reinforced that Gippsland Water was looking to understand all genuine perspectives - whether those perspectives supported or were opposed to the project.

However, this impartial approach meant that Gippsland Water did not address any misinformation circulated by some people who were strongly opposed to a wind farm in the area. A community member started a petition in opposition to the idea of a wind farm at Dutson Downs, with some social media commentary opposing the idea, and may have directly increased the proportion of negative views expressed in the survey and other engagement activities. But, notably, there was positive media coverage of the idea, too, including a WIN News story and radio interview on ABC local radio.

Given the nature of the topic, this kind of conversation was expected. The main priority of this engagement was to understand current levels of support for the potential wind farm, as well as to capture a better understanding of the community's concerns, hopes and attitudes. All commentary - both in support of the potential wind farm and opposed - helps build an understanding of what the best next steps are and what kind of information will be important for the community as the project is further explored.

This document outlines the findings of the engagement with this in mind - detailing the questions, issues, concerns and opportunities within the community.

Engagement process

The engagement process undertaken by Gippsland Water was designed to give everyone in the community an opportunity to have their say. To do this, Gippsland Water delivered a program of engagement targeted to two audiences: its customers, and the community local to the potential Dutson Downs site.

Survey

An online survey was the centrepiece of the engagement, to gauge participants' levels of support for the potential wind farm, and their reasoning and any concerns behind their decisions. Engagement activity via social media and traditional media pointed customers and the community back to the survey to share their views, as a central source of truth.

Focus groups

To gather deeper insights into the perceptions of the potential wind farm, three focus groups were conducted with Gippsland Water customers. These groups were held to explore current attitudes towards renewable energy, whether these customers would support the potential wind farm, and reasons why or why not.

Drop-in days

Acknowledging the community local to the potential wind farm site are most likely to be impacted, a series of drop-in days were held in local towns: Golden Beach, Longford, Loch Sport and Seaspray. Staffed by Gippsland Water representatives, these sessions gave the community an opportunity to learn more about the potential wind farm, ask questions, and raise any concerns.

Online event

Given the geographic breadth of Gippsland, an online event was held for customers who may not be able to attend a drop-in day in person but were still interested in finding out more information. The online event was managed by an external facilitator and presented by Gippsland Water Managing Director Sarah Cumming, and General Manager Assets Nicolas Moss. Similar to the drop-in days, the online event consisted of a presentation of information about the potential wind farm and time for a community Q&A. The online event was published on Gippsland Water's website.

Stakeholder engagement

In addition to the public engagement, Gippsland Water has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement with relevant parties. This included engagement and direct conversations and phone calls to all neighbouring properties within 5km of the potential site, as well as the local council and Traditional Owners. Letters and fact sheets were also sent out.

Focus groups

Overview

Three focus groups were conducted with Gippsland Water customers. Participants were drawn from Gippsland Water's customer sounding board and represented customers across Gippsland Water's region.

Recruitment for the focus groups focused on ensuring a broad geographic spread, a mix of ages and gender, as well as inclusion of people with disability and First Nations Australians. Eight participants were recruited for each group. Each participant was given a \$100 incentive from Gippsland Water in appreciation for their time.

Table 1. Focus group participant demographics.

Location	Gender	Age	Notes
Wurruk/Sale	Female	31-40	Identifies as Aboriginal
Tyers	Female	31-40	Identifies as Aboriginal
Sale	Male	31-40	Identifies as having a disability
Traralgon	Male	31-40	
Drouin	Female	61-70	
Loch Sport	Male	71+	
Drouin	Male	61-70	
Trafalgar East	Female	51-60	
Morwell	Female	21-30	
Traralgon	Female	21-30	
Maffra	Male	51-60	
Heyfield	Male	51-60	
Sale	Female	31-40	
Trafalgar	Female	Under 40	
Drouin West	Male	41-50	
Drouin	Male	31-40	
Toongabbie	Female	41-50	
Warragul	Female	31-40	
Warragul	Male	31-40	
Morwell	Female	31-40	
Sale	Male	31-40	
Maffra	Male	61-70	
Boolarra	Male	41-50	
Drouin West	Male	41-50	

A discussion guide was developed for facilitators to lead the group. The guide covered general attitudes to renewable energy, a presentation about the potential wind farm at Dutson Downs, and a discussion about people's thoughts on the potential wind farm.

The key objectives of the focus groups were to understand:

- If Gippsland Water customers support the potential wind farm at Dutson Downs
- Whether Gippsland Water customers perceive the development of a wind farm as part of Gippsland Water's remit
- Reasons why people support a wind farm or reasons why they don't, and whether these positions might change if concerns were addressed.

Insights summary

The insights from the focus groups are grouped into two dimensions:

1. Attitudes towards the potential wind farm
2. Concerns

Attitudes towards the potential wind farm

All participants generally understood the need for renewable energy. However, the participants expressed mixed attitudes towards the potential wind farm in Dutson Downs and indicated information they would need to truly support a wind farm at Dutson Downs.

The insights are organised into four themes, with commentary and selected illustrative quotes:

1. Impact on bills
2. Local economy
3. Wind farm ownership
4. Location

Impact on bills

Across all three groups, many shared the view that the wind farm should equate to reduced bills from Gippsland Water for customers.

Participants generally fell into one of three camps:

1. Those who wanted a potential wind farm to save them money personally
2. Those who would support the wind farm as long as it didn't cost them any more (i.e. it remained cost neutral)
3. Those who would support the wind farm, even if it meant their bills increased slightly.

"If it's cost neutral, that would be terrific. Even at a cost increase, future cost increases won't be as big had the project not continued."

For many participants, these views went hand in hand with the perception that Gippsland Water bills were comparably higher than other water corporations.

"I have found Gippsland Water is really expensive, more expensive than people I know in Melbourne, is it actually going to bring down the cost of bills, or is that just what we're being told? Because these bills have always been expensive."

Given this perception, some participants wanted assurance that the project would not adversely affect bills. There was a sense that some felt the upfront costs of constructing and setting up the wind farm could be passed onto customers.

"The cost is definitely a concern. Is it going to be a huge upfront cost that's going to be on our bills?"

Given the current economic climate during the time of this engagement (increased cost of living pressures, etc.) participants felt some members of the community would not be able to support any project that could potentially cost them money.

“As much as they know climate change is an issue we need to tackle now, they can’t afford to do it if it’s going to cost more money.”

If the project is to continue, it will be important for the community to understand the individual financial impact - whether that be positive, negative or neutral. Cost was front of mind for participants, so for them to make an informed decision about whether or not they support the project, this must be a central part of the conversation.

Local economy

Many participants had questions about how the project would support the local community, and it was one of the more important factors impacting their decision - i.e. if there weren’t clear, demonstrable benefits for the community, then they would not support the project.

“To get the community on side, I feel there should be something in writing to say it will be built with local workers... A lot of locals – considering Hazelwood is closed, Australia paper mill on its last legs pretty much - potential for a lot of people being out of work, this should be another factor too.”

The local context, and the shift away from coal, must be considered if the project is to move ahead. Promises for boosts to the local economy will be well received, but it’s important for these to be substantiated with action.

Participants also questioned how many jobs the potential wind farm would create and, importantly, the ongoing benefits for the local economy.

“One – the effect on local jobs. How many jobs will this put on?”

“Is it going to be local people involved in construction, ongoing maintenance? And where is the money going to go, is it going to be owned by Gippsland Water?”

“Making sure it’s not detrimental to jobs in the local area. Be mindful of what has happened in the last few years, and what is coming.”

Wind farm ownership

The question of ownership was raised by a number of participants.

For many, the link between Gippsland Water and wind farm ownership was unclear. Instead, it was felt that a suitably experienced third party should be responsible for the potential wind farm, with the feeling that operating a wind farm was outside Gippsland Water’s expertise.

However, with this conversation comes questions of ownership and responsibility. If the wind farm was to be outsourced to a partnering organisation, it will be important to be transparent and share details of this partnership with the community, including:

- How Gippsland Water makes money from the partnership
- Who retains responsibility for the wind farm (including repairs, managing the components at the end of their life, etc.)
- How excess energy generated is redistributed.

For example, some participants asked what would be done with excess energy - i.e. if it would be put back into the grid.

“The question is, how much power do they really need? A wind farm is gonna generate a hell of a lot of power. One of those small wind farms will generate enough power for a small community. Surely Gippsland Water won’t need all of that power.”

For these participants, understanding the logistics of how the potential wind farm would operate was an important part of their decision-making. Participants were looking for clarity on how it would work, with a clear demonstration of the benefits to Gippsland Water, its customers, and the environment.

Location

Participants across the groups were in general agreement that the potential location is a good one.

“Prime location, there’s nothing out there. I reckon it’s a great location to put it.”

“It’s a prime location and that wind blows pretty bloody good.”

For participants who were familiar with Dutson Downs, notably positive elements of the potential location included its remoteness (“nothing there”, “no housing”, “currently a very boring drive”), the lack of several properties (“no housing”, “no one to be annoyed by the noise”), that the location is suitably windy (“wind blows good”), and that there is little likelihood for the land to be used for anything else (“Wellington Shire doesn’t permit subdivisions, so can’t foresee suburban growth”).

Some participants also noted that generally, wind energy made sense for the area.

“I do think it makes sense for the wind because Victoria doesn’t have that year-long sunshine. Particularly down that way in Sale. Does make more sense to me why we’d look at wind.”

However, there were some questions about why wind and not other alternative energy solutions (like solar), which would need to be addressed in any future engagement.

Ultimately, most participants agreed that the potential site made sense for the project.

Concerns

Discussion during the focus groups raised some specific concerns. These are, variously, topics to be explored or myths to be busted. Honestly discussing them will build trust with the audience.

1. Noise
2. Sustainability of wind turbines
3. Environmental risk

Noise

Some participants had concerns about the noise of the potential wind farm and the potential negative impacts of that noise on the local community.

“The noise! They are quite noisy – how close are these going to the locals, and how will they affect them in that way?”

While work has already been done to understand what the noise impact of the potential wind farm could be, it will be important to expand on this and clearly communicate what the anticipated impact will be.

The noise impact of wind farms is widely documented and debated - so establishing clear messaging grounded in research early on will be integral if the project moves ahead.

Noise and its potential impact on neighbouring properties is often the key concern for people who oppose wind farms. For example, court cases opposing wind farms are often centred on the noise they create, and the potential impact on human health. To protect Gippsland Water down the line if the project goes ahead, it will be important to establish a defensible, data-backed position on the noise impact early on.

Sustainability of wind turbines

A key concern for many participants was what would happen to the wind turbines at the end of their life.

“Where are they going to be removed to? Are they going to be recycled? I think you’ll find a small percentage of not being recycled properly. I know some parts are, but unfortunately not all of them so they end up in landfill. That’s my concern.”

Often, these questions were raised in the context of questioning the wind farm’s positive impacts on the environment. As one participant put it, “you don’t want to rob Peter to pay Paul.” In other words, the wind farm must have a net positive impact on the environment.

However, one participant questioned the validity of these concerns.

“These questions about end of life - also the case in relation to all infrastructure, including coal-fired power stations. Shouldn’t be any different in this instance to any other. I’m surprised to hear this is a concern.”

The key question and concern to address is what happens to the wind turbines once they are no longer operational. If the potential wind farm moves ahead, ensuring clear and consistent messaging about end of life plans will be critical.

Environmental risk

Some participants raised environmental concerns should the potential wind farm go ahead, with a general view that many people in the community are highly engaged in addressing environmental issues.

“Are there any environmental risks? Because we’ve got a lot of greenies down here.”

Specifically, there were questions about the potential impact on bird life, and if the impact on native fauna had been considered. Similarly to concerns around end-of-life plans, these concerns were centred on ensuring a net positive impact on the environment from the potential wind farm.

“I’m a big animal lover and apparently the amount of birds killed by the turbines is pretty bad. Apparently. I don’t know what the stats are and they probably don’t monitor it that much because it’s very negative about turbines.”

If the potential wind farm goes ahead, it will be important to address what is being done to ensure minimal impact on the environment.

Need for more information

In addition to their concerns, participants generally had a strong desire for further information about the potential positives and negatives of a wind farm for the area. Conducting these focus groups at this early stage meant that some participants may have been more negative or undecided than they would have been if the idea had been progressed further with more details to provide. However, conducting these focus groups provided invaluable indications of the considerations, information and evidence needed to address the community’s concerns through the planning process if it were to progress.

“It really comes down to transparency. We need to know that information to make an informed decision.”

Without knowing all the detailed information, participants felt they could not make an informed decision about whether or not they supported the project. This led to many feeling uncomfortable to say whether or not they would support the potential wind farm - citing a need for more information as essential in their decision-making.

“I am finding it hard to form an opinion without knowing all the facts. How much is this going to cost? Is it actually going to be done by 2025? Who’s building it? Is it locals? Where is it all coming from? If we don’t go for the wind farm what are the other options? I think we’re missing pieces of the puzzle to say yes or no. So I sit on the fence until I know it’s definitely the best option.”

This sentiment was echoed across groups, and across participants. Many felt further information was necessary before they could assess whether they thought the wind farm was a good idea or not.

The lack of detailed information was leading to scepticism among some participants. Some questioned how some information could be known (i.e. that there would be downward pressure on bills) without the full picture.

“I support the wind farm, I’m just really sceptical with the information sheet saying bills could go down. It’s placing emphasis on that when, how can we know that? I’m just not convinced.”

A particular focus point for those wanting more information was a more detailed breakdown of why the wind farm was being considered above other options. In particular, participants wanted to understand if work had been done to compare the wind farm to other renewable energy options, like solar.

“I don’t think it needs to be the very best option, we just need to know what are the options and where does it rank in terms of other options?”

Some also wanted to know that the potential project would be the best option for the Gippsland region in particular. While some felt wind was a good option for the climate, others wanted to see all the options compared so they could feel assured it was going to be the most effective for the region.

“Is it the best for our location? The best for Gippsland – not the worldwide standard, what’s going to be the best for our local area? For Gippsland Water as a whole, doesn’t have to be top tier, but also for the customer who will have to pay those costs.”

Drop-in sessions

Gippsland Water conducted a series of face-to-face drop-in sessions in four towns surrounding Dutson Downs: Golden Beach, Longford, Loch Sport and Seaspray. These locations were chosen because of their proximity to the potential site at Dutson Downs.

The sessions were staffed by Gippsland Water team members and provided an opportunity for interested members of the public to learn more about the potential wind farm, and get their questions answered. Visitors were encouraged to give feedback via the public survey, however, themes from the discussions on the day were captured for consideration.

Overall positive sentiments

Generally, the majority of visitors were objectively wanting to understand the project. People asked questions looking to gain more information about the project.

Overall, very few of the visitors were opposed to the potential wind farm. Instead, a recurring theme from the discussions centred on wanting to ensure a long-lasting and meaningful benefit to the community should the project go ahead.

Specific benefits

- Reliable power
- Environmental benefits
- Financial benefits

Potential concerns and caveats for support

While few visitors opposed the potential wind farm, some raised concerns if the project were to move ahead

Location

A minority of visitors who were not opposed to wind farms, expressed concerns about the location. For some, the potential site at Dutson Downs was not a suitable location.

For some locals in Loch Sport, there are existing concerns about an unreliable power supply. When the drop-in session took place, visitors reported three power outages in the past week. With this in mind, visitors felt positively about the potential for a wind farm to provide reliable power to the local area with fewer power outages in future. However, many were sceptical about whether the potential wind farm would *actually* help to provide reliable energy.

Local amenity

The primary concern expressed amongst locals was a perception that the potential wind farm may adversely affect property prices in the area. Similarly, there was a perceived potential negative impact on people's 'way of life'. These concerns were voiced particularly by those living in and near the Golden Beach and Paradise Beach townships.

A minority of visitors also shared they currently loved the quietness and remoteness of where they live. There was a perception that the potential wind farm would change this.

Some visitors also expressed concern about the potential impact of sound from the wind turbines.

Environmental impacts

Some visitors raised concerns about potential negative impacts on the environment around the potential site.

One concern raised was around the proximity of the site to Ramsar wetlands. The potential site currently has Ramsar wetlands on either side. Ramsar wetlands are those that are representative, rare or unique wetlands or are important for conserving biological diversity.

Another concern was around the perceived lack of ability to recycle wind turbines at the end of their life. There were also questions about the perceived need to use oil in the development or running of the wind farm.

The final environmental concern raised was around the potential impact on wildlife. The most common wildlife concerns were about the potential impact on birds - most notably local wedgetail eagles and migratory birds.

Safety

Some visitors had questions about the safety of the potential wind farm. In general, some asked how fires at the top of wind turbines could be managed. Visitors in Loch Sport raised concerns about bushfires. As an area known to be bushfire prone and with only one way in and out, visitors wanted reassurance the potential wind farm would not adversely impact safety during a bushfire.

Engagement program breadth and scope

Some visitors mistrusted the engagement process itself. Some visitors expressed concern about the timing of the drop-in sessions, with inadequate detail provided about the potential wind farm. They questioned who the 'stakeholders' or potential partners might be, and whether the engagement was genuine. Some also expressed concern about whether the findings of the public consultation would weigh into the final decision.

Another concern was around the format of the engagement, with some visitors expressing the view that Gippsland Water should have written to every household in the area - with the perception that older

people in the area would not be aware. However, Gippsland Water had directly engaged all residents who live 2-5km from the area and had sent them letters and fact sheets.

Finally, some visitors questioned why a wind farm was being considered instead of other renewable energy projects for the Dutson Downs site. Examples of alternatives included solar or hydro, with the perception that these would have less impact on the local area.

Survey

Overview

An online survey was central to understanding the community's levels of support for the potential wind farm and the main reasons for their sentiments.

The survey consisted of 11 questions, including demographic questions and community engagement questions, to understand community support for the wind farm at Dutson Downs, reasons for or against it, and what might change their mind if they were against the wind farm or undecided. All questions included in the survey are in Appendix B.

The survey was open to public responses for three weeks, from 13 February until 6 March 2023. Engagement activity encouraged Gippsland Water customers and the community to respond to the survey as a way to share their views. These efforts included encouraging community members attending in-person consultation sessions to complete the survey online via a QR code provided by Gippsland Water representatives at those sessions.

Once the survey was closed, the data were cleaned by:

- Removing incomplete responses (e.g., responses with only one or two questions answered)
- Removing any duplicate responses (e.g., where there were multiple responses from the same respondent).

The final dataset, including quantitative and qualitative responses, was then analysed for key insights.

Demographic breakdown

In total, a valid sample of 541 individuals responded to the survey. As a general rule, this sample size should provide reliable statistics for the overall population of Gippsland (48,453, according to the 2021 Australian Census; (ABS, 2022), with a confidence interval of at least 95± 5%.

The sample was relatively representative of the population of interest: most of the respondents were Gippsland residents and customers of Gippsland Water, and they represented a mix of age groups and locations across Gippsland (and beyond). At this stage, the survey was only open to people aged 16+, primarily to minimise any potential ethical concerns and added complexities that come with research with

children, however unlikely, including any impacts of this engagement activity and related sensitivities, in this very early stage. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the sample's demographic characteristics.

Table 2. Community engagement survey sample demographics.

Characteristic	Sub-group	Responses (n)	Percent
Age	16-20 years	5	0.9%
	21-30 years	23	4.3%
	31-40 years	69	12.8%
	41-50 years	101	18.7%
	51-60 years	108	20.0%
	61-70 years	129	23.8%
	71+ years	72	13.3%
	No response	34	6.3%
Relationship to the Gippsland region	My main place of residence is in Gippsland	425	79%
	I'm a visitor to Gippsland	18	3%
	I'm a local business operator	21	4%
	Other/Not-listed	12	2%
	I own a holiday home in Gippsland	87	16%
	<i>No response</i>	32	5.9%
Are you a customer of Gippsland Water?	Yes	385	71.2%
	No	111	20.5%
	I'm not sure	12	2.2%
	<i>No response</i>	33	6.1%
Distance between location and centre of Dutson	10km or less	80	14.8%
	10-25km	94	17.4%
	26-40km	73	13.5%
	More than 40 km	212	39.2%
	<i>No response</i>	82	15.2%
Household income circumstances	Don't have enough to meet basic expenses	9	1.7%
	I'd prefer not to answer	72	13.3%
	Just meet basic expenses	76	14.0%
	Live comfortably financially	161	29.8%
	Meet basic expenses with a little left over for extras	188	34.8%
	<i>No response</i>	35	6.5%

In the sample, most but not all of the age groups were well represented. The number of respondents from each age bracket from 31 to 71+ years of age was practically evenly distributed (with 69-129 responses from each of these five brackets, comprising 12.8%-23.8% of the sample). However, the two youngest age brackets were comparatively under-represented (28 responses, 5.2%). At least two reasons can likely explain respondents being primarily 41-70 years of age, with fewer aged 16-30:

- 1) Proportionally fewer younger people live in Gippsland compared to older groups (ABS, 2021), so there are fewer potential respondents in these younger age groups.
- 2) Younger people are less likely to have moved out of their family home, so fewer would engage with Gippsland Water as customers, and fewer would be likely to respond to a survey like this one. This group should, however, be focused on if and when future engagements for this project occur, to ensure their voices are well represented.

The large majority of respondents were residents of Gippsland (79%), and most were customers of Gippsland Water (71.2%). The size of the Gippsland resident group was followed by owners of a holiday home in Gippsland (16%), local business operators (4%), visitors to Gippsland (3%), and people with 'other' relationship to Gippsland or without a response (7.9%).

The distance between the respondents' town of residence and Dutson Downs varied across the sample. The largest proportion of respondents resided over 40km away from Dutson Downs, followed by more equal groups of respondents who lived 26-40km (13.5%), 10-25km (17.4%), and 10km or less (14.8%) from Dutson Downs (see Table 3, below).

Table 3. Community engagement survey respondents' primary locations.

Location*	Distance from Dutson Downs	n	%	Location (cont.)	Distance from Dutson Downs	n	%
Sale	24km	65	12.0%	Wurruk	26km	3	0.6%
Golden Beach	8km	64	11.8%	Yarragon	109km	3	0.6%
Traralgon	68km	59	10.9%	Yinnar	87km	3	0.6%
Loch Sport	28km	53	9.8%	Briagolong	45km	2	0.4%
Warragul	121km	23	4.3%	Darnum	115km	2	0.4%
Moe	93km	20	3.7%	Gormandale	55km	2	0.4%
Morwell	81km	20	3.7%	Mirboo North	104km	2	0.4%
Drouin	128km	15	2.8%	Paynesville	47km	2	0.4%
Paradise Beach	9km	15	2.8%	Stratford	33km	2	0.4%
Longford	123km	14	2.6%	The Honeysuckles	19km	2	0.4%
Seaspray	22km	13	2.4%	Tyers	73km	2	0.4%
Newborough	89km	12	2.2%	Airly	30km	1	0.2%
Churchill	79km	11	2.0%	Boisdale	45km	1	0.2%
Maffra	40km	8	1.5%	Denison	49km	1	0.2%
Hazelwood North	73km	4	0.7%	Glomar Beach	10km	1	0.2%
Heyfield	52km	4	0.7%	Hallora	129km	1	0.2%
Neerim South	121km	4	0.7%	Kilmany	37km	1	0.2%
Stradbroke	27km	4	0.7%	Leongatha	123km	1	0.2%
Yallourn North	83km	4	0.7%	Myrtlebank	29km	1	0.2%
Boolarra	93km	3	0.6%	Tinamba	46km	1	0.2%
Melbourne	211km	3	0.6%	Trafalgar	101km	1	0.2%
Rosedale	46km	3	0.6%	No response	-	82	15.2%
Willow Grove	101km	3	0.6%				

*Q: In which town is your primary Gippsland address?

The distance between Dutson Downs and each of the townships was measured using an online tool, calculated with a straight line from the centre of each area.

Approximately half of all respondents in the sample were located in one of four towns:

- Sale (65 responses; 12%), 24km from Dutson Downs
- Golden Beach (64, 11.8%), 8km from Dutson Downs
- Traralgon (59; 10.9%) 68km from Dutson Downs
- Loch Sport (53; 9.8%), 28km from Dutson Downs.

These statistics indicate that those living closer to Dutson Downs were over-represented in the sample compared to those living further away, with greater response rates from residents in areas closer to

Dutson Downs, such as Loch Sport, Paradise Beach, and Golden Beach, compared to residents in areas further away. For example, 5.2% (53) residents of Loch Sport (population 1,021) and 3.4% (15) residents of Paradise Beach (population 444) completed the survey. In comparison, though more residents of Sale responded to the survey (65), they represented only 0.5% of that population (14,255). This was expected, with local residents who live closer to the Dutson Downs site would be more likely to feel a larger 'stake' in a potential wind farm in the area, with stronger concerns and sentiments about positive and negative local impacts.

Survey insights

Levels of support for the wind farm

Almost twice as many respondents indicated their support for *making land available at Gippsland Water's Dutson Down site to build or host a wind farm* (314 respondents; 58%), compared to those who did not support it (172 respondents; 32%). The remaining respondents (55; 10%) were undecided or indicated no opinion (see Figure 1, below).

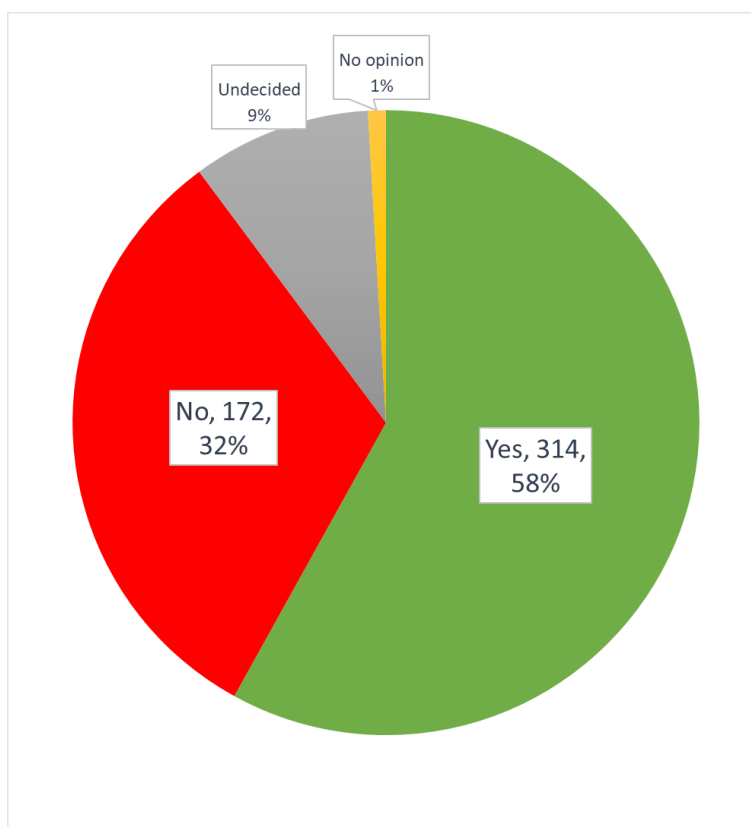


Figure 1. Responses to "Do you think Gippsland Water should consider making land available at its Dutson Downs site to either build or host a wind farm?"

However, along with the level of engagement (see demographic breakdown section), support for the wind farm seems to at least in part depend on the respondents' location of residence in Gippsland relative to Dutson Downs, their relationship to Gippsland, and whether they are a customer of Gippsland

Water. The breakdown of respondents' support (Yes/Support, No/Against, Undecided, and no opinion) across demographic groups is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Respondents' support for a wind farm at Dutson Downs.

		Q: Do you think Gippsland Water should consider making land available at its Dutson Downs site to either build or host a wind farm?							
Characteristic	Category	Responses (n)				% within category			
		Yes (Support)	No (Against)	Undecided	No opinion	Yes (Support)	No (Against)	Undecided	No opinion
Relationship to Gippsland	Main place of residence in Gippsland	260	125	37	3	61%	29%	9%	1%
	Own a holiday home in Gippsland	48	37	2	0	55%	43%	2%	0%
	Local business operator*	11	8	0	2	52%	38%	0%	10%
	Visitor to Gippsland*	6	9	0	2	35%	53%	0%	12%
	Other*	3	6	3	0	25%	50%	25%	0%
Customer of Gippsland Water?	Yes	252	100	29	4	66%	26%	7.5%	1/0%
	No	46	56	9	0	41%	50%	8%	0%
	I'm not sure*	6	3	3	0	50%	25%	25%	0%
	No response*	10	13	9	1	30%	39%	27%	3%
Distance from Dutson Downs**	10km or less	29	45	6	0	36%	56%	8%	0%
	10-25 km	62	27	5	0	66%	29%	5%	0%
	26-40 km	44	21	8	0	60%	29%	11%	0%
	More than 40 km	158	38	14	2	75%	18%	7%	1%
	No response	21	41	17	3	26%	50%	21%	4%
Age	16-20 years*	4	1	0	0	80%	20%	0%	0%
	21-30 years*	16	7	0	0	70%	30%	0%	0%
	31-40 years	45	22	2	0	65%	32%	3%	0%
	41-50 years	57	43	1	0	56%	43%	1%	0%
	51-60 years	51	38	15	4	47%	35%	14%	4%
	61-70 years	84	31	14	0	65%	24%	11%	0%
	71+ years	47	18	7	0	65%	25%	10%	0%
	No response	10	12	11	1	29%	35%	32%	3%
Gender	Female	144	75	23	2	59%	31%	9%	1%
	Male	154	70	15	2	64%	29%	6%	1%
	Not stated*	10	13	10	1	29%	38%	29%	3%
	Non-binary*	1	0	0	0	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Prefer not to answer*	5	14	2	0	24%	67%	10%	0%
Household income situation	Meet basic expenses with a little for extras	130	44	12	2	69%	23%	6%	1%
	Live comfortably financially	113	37	10	1	70%	23%	6%	1%
	Just meet basic expenses	42	28	5	1	55%	37%	7%	1%
	Don't have enough to meet basic expenses*	3	3	3	0	33%	33%	33%	0%
	Prefer not to say*	16	46	10	0	22%	64%	14%	0%
	No response	10	14	10	1	29%	40%	29%	3%

*For groups with very low response counts (<40), the percent breakdowns for sentiment comparisons are highly unreliable. Recommend only interpreting groups with larger sample sizes.

**Distance from Dutson Down taken from the centre of the town of residence and the centre of Dutson Downs.

As shown in Table 4, sentiments towards the potential wind farm were similar across general demographic categories (i.e. age, gender, household income situation).

Greater proportions of respondents expressed negative sentiments towards the wind farm compared with other groups:

- Respondents in communities living closer to Dutson Downs (within 10km; 56% against), compared to respondents living further away (18-29%). This trend was expected, with those living closer having potentially more direct or greater stakes in any negative impacts for the immediate area and residents. And, people tend to avoid losses far more than they are motivated to chase gains (e.g. Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), so local residents may lean toward the negative to avoid negative impacts even if they see real benefits from a wind farm.
- Respondents with a holiday home in Gippsland (43% against) compared to those who live in Gippsland (29% against), though most people in each of these categories supported the wind farm.
 - Note that over half of the 'Visitors to Gippsland' group were against the wind farms, but there are too few respondents in this group to make reliable judgements about this group (e.g., there were only six respondents for 'yes' and nine for 'no' within this group).
- Respondents who were *not* customers of Gippsland Water (50% against, 41% in support), in contrast to customers of Gippsland Water who were predominantly in support of the wind farm (26% against; 66% in support). However, 71 of the 92 respondents indicating they are not customers of Gippsland Water, are residents of the closest towns to Dutson Downs (i.e., Paradise Beach, Golden Beach, Longford, The Honeysuckles, Seaspray), and 33 of those respondents were against the idea.
 - Excluding the respondents who lived within 25km of Dutson Downs, slightly more than half (9 out of 17) of the customers of Gippsland Water supported the wind farm, with none undecided.
- Though there may be trends in the broader population depending on some of these categories - such as small businesses and tourists in Gippsland - the sample collected is not large enough, particularly for these subgroups, to provide reliable statistical trends for them. But, these groups are important to keep in mind as a focus for future engagement activities if this idea progresses.

These proportions are illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4.

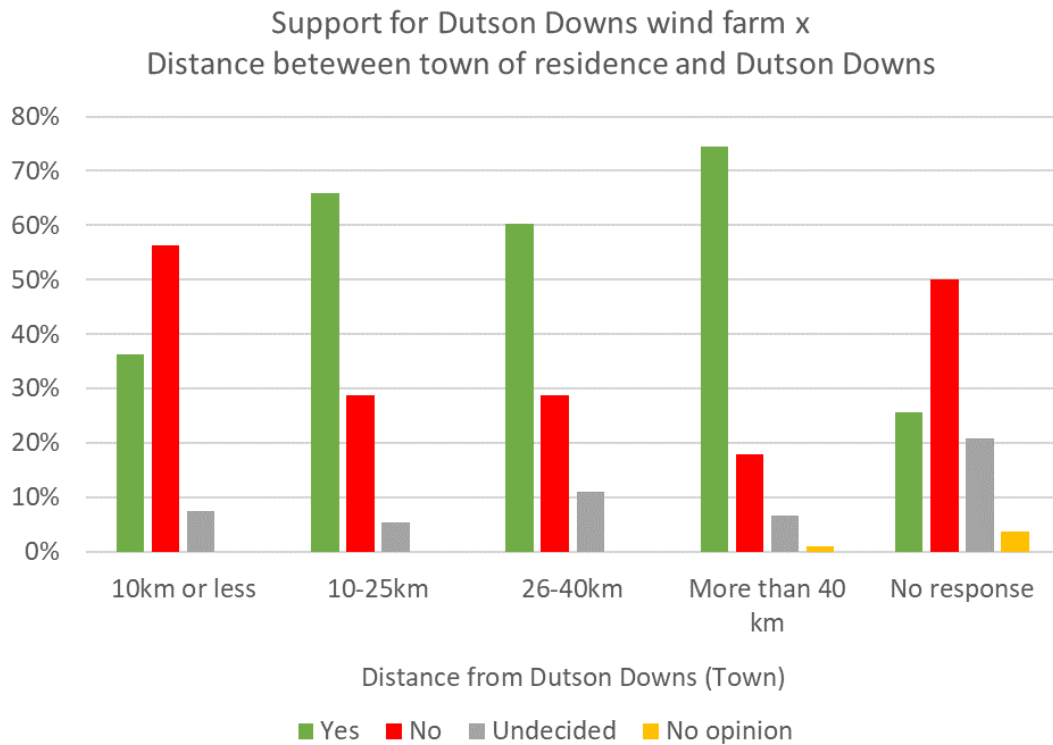


Figure 2. Respondents' sentiment towards a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs and the distance of their town of residence from Dutson Downs.

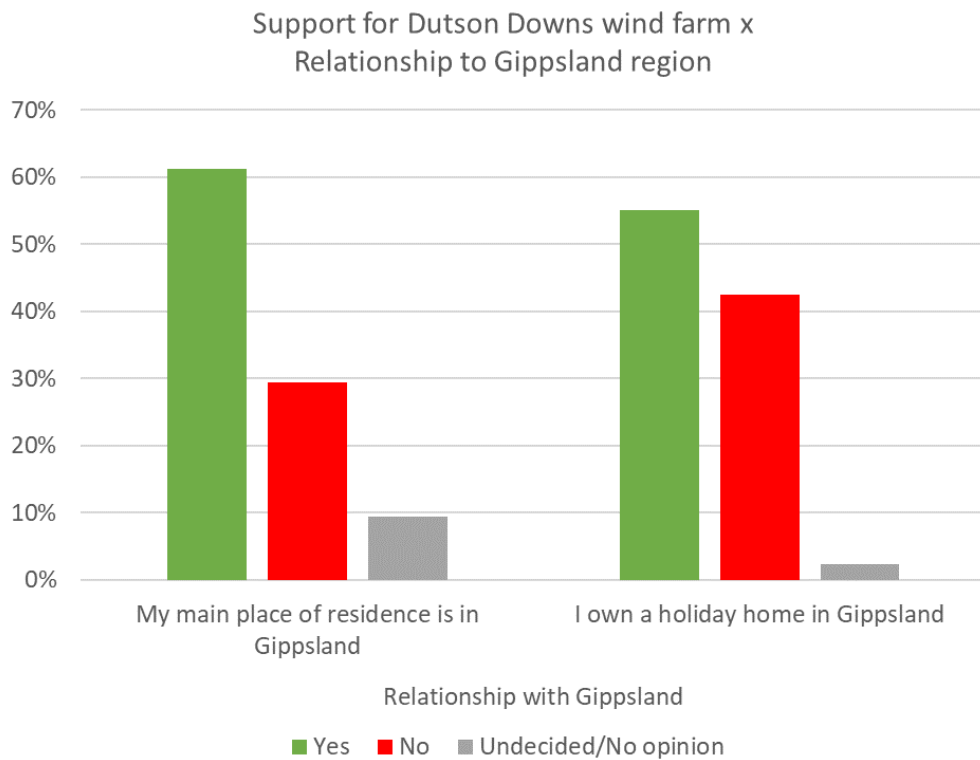


Figure 3. Respondents' sentiment towards a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs and their Gippsland Water customer status.

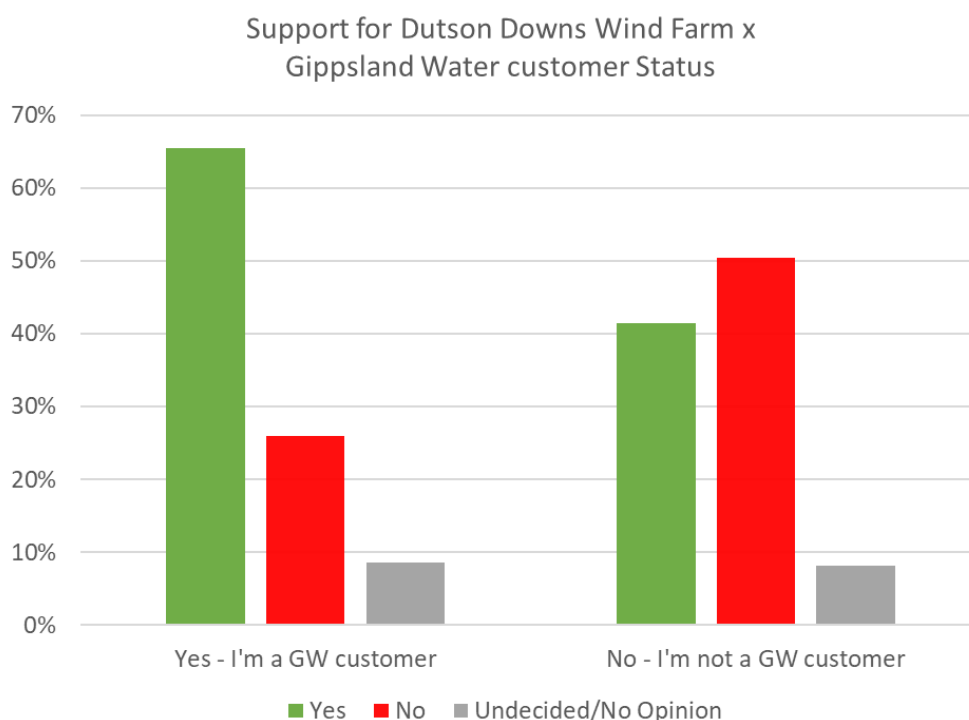


Figure 4. Respondents' sentiment towards a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs and their Gippsland Water customer status.

Reasons for supporting the wind farm

Six key themes emerged from respondents' reasons for supporting the wind farm at Dutson Downs.

The overwhelmingly most common reason for supporting the idea of a wind farm was its potential to improve the environment by providing clean and reliable energy. There was strong enthusiasm for a renewable energy source to reduce carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels, and ultimately help address climate change.

Other reasons for support include Dutson Downs as an ideal location for a wind farm, reduced water/energy costs for locals/customers, an energy source to address local energy needs, and local employment opportunities, particularly with the closures of local fossil fuel power stations. Overall, customers of Gippsland Water commented on reduced costs for customers as a reason to support the wind farm, but some non-customers also shared this view.

Table 5. Reasons for supporting a wind farm at Dutson Downs, provided by respondents who supported it.

Theme/Reason for support	Example comments
<p>1) Environmental benefit: Renewable and sustainable energy to reduce emissions, reduce fossil fuels, and address climate change.</p> <p>Many respondents indicated that the main benefit of wind farms at Dutson Downs was as a source of renewable and clean energy, which helps to reduce emissions, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels (e.g. coal) and natural gas, and contribute to addressing climate change.</p> <p>Some respondents also mentioned that this wind farm represents a sustainable future for the local area and that they have seen similar projects be successful elsewhere (e.g. in Queensland, New South Wales, and other parts of Victoria).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sustainable energy is an absolute must for future water and power generation. Locating a wind farm at Dutson Downs will have the least impact on the environment” • “The main reason I feel this way would be the reduction of use of coal-based electricity and in the long term the reduction of need for coal-based energy.” • “We need to shift to non-Carbon polluting sources of energy asap and this project will assist in meeting this quest. It also makes commercial sense as ongoing energy fuel costs are largely avoided by completing this project.” • “Renewable energy is the future and if it doesn’t harm the area it’s a no brainer” • “By adding a wind farm to Dutson Downs we will reduce carbon emissions that will further help our environments and our earth from toxic pollutants. This will help our surroundings and will be a step towards reducing climate change. So future generations will still be able to see the wonders of our beautiful earth.” • “I have seen wind farms used in QLD and NSW - I think while the country is working towards zero emissions, wind farms are an amazing option.”
<p>2) Ideal location: The potential location of the wind farm at Dutson Downs is an ideal choice and use of land.</p> <p>Many respondents indicated that the potential location was ideal, with reasons including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is located far away from residents so that it would be minimally disruptive to the community - although some of this group were concerned that it may negatively impact the local wildlife and their habitat • The strong coastal winds in the area are suitable for reliable wind power generation • It’s a currently under-utilised area, close to existing transmission infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I see the Dutson facility as being a good location with coastal winds and a good amount of land surrounding the proposed location that is not planned for residential living.” • “Seems like a good spot far away from houses” • “The land is far away from any major residential areas. Wind is a good source of renewable energy.”
<p>3) Financial returns for locals: Reduced water or energy bills.</p> <p>Many respondents supported the wind farm if it reduced their water or energy bills. Still, some respondents also expressed concern that the project’s costs may increase customer costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If it lowers my costs in the long run, I support it.” • “To reduce my water bill” • “Use the highly added profit from the land use to reduce customer costs..of water bills...as long as some gets passed on to customers benefit...” • “Big fan of renewable energy, it is definitely the future. My only concern it that the cost of the project will be passed on in extra water costs”

Theme/Reason for support	Example comments
<p>4) Economic benefits for locals: Provides employment opportunities for locals</p> <p>Respondents were positive about employment benefits, with potential for local jobs to manufacture, build, and maintain and operate the wind farm. Some respondents were concerned about job losses in the region from fossil fuel energy plants closing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “...Also with the ongoing large companies shutting it would potentially give work to the area.” “...Would provide valuable employment opportunities for the region...” “Reduce reliance on coal. I'd be more happy if the wind turbines were constructed and installed by locals too....”
<p>5) Energy benefits for locals: Provides reliable and diversified energy to address current power needs in the area.</p> <p>Many local respondents had experienced blackouts and brownouts. These respondents were positive about the wind farm as a reliable energy source that could address these issues while also diversifying energy sources, particularly after increasing fossil fuel-powered plant closures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Just a good way to help us not have black outs” “Clean energy is essential and this area seems viable with minimal, if any, disturbance to individual landholders/residents.” “It seems a good use of our (i.e. the communities) land. It adds diversity for our energy supplies... eg solar, coal, hydro & wind” “Any available land should be used for either Solar or Wind farm renewable energy to eliminate any shortfall of electricity when the current coal powered plants are closed.”
<p>6) Support was contingent on further information and having some concerns addressed.</p> <p>Similar to respondents who were undecided on whether they supported or were against the wind farms (see below), the support of some of this group was contingent on addressing concerns (similar concerns to those who did not support the wind farm), including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of further information and consultations (e.g. describing the number of turbines planned, information that supports its benefits / outlines the costs) Minimising disturbance to residents, including any noise disturbance and impact on the visual beauty of the area Thorough consideration of alternatives (e.g. solar power). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I think the location can offer the right environment conditions and I support the move to renewables. However, I'd like to understand the impact on neighbouring properties. And if the location is moved from the indicated area, I reserve my support until the new site/impact is fully understood.” “I support wind farms when there is no cost to our natural bushland and wildlife and aren't located in scenic land and marine areas as was the proposed Waratah Bay wind farm which received public backlash. I would hope they would not be the height of the proposed Delburn turbines which will be very visible due to their height and quite close to farmlets.”

Reasons for not supporting the wind farm

Nine common themes emerged from respondents' reasons and concerns for not supporting the wind farm, including a need for further information.

The nine themes reflected the main concerns raised in focus groups and the drop-in sessions. But, in contrast, the survey respondents seem to be more strongly concerned with the potential harm to local wildlife and habitats, potential impact on the visual beauty of the area, and the noise generated by the turbines. These concerns were not unique to those living in local communities (e.g. Golden Beach, Paradise Beach, Loch Sport), but the noise and visual concerns seemed to be held more strongly by these community segments. Gippsland Water customer respondents did not appear to present unique reasons for not supporting the wind farm; they were slightly more strongly concerned that a wind farm would not reduce their bills, but some non-customers were also concerned about this issue.

In summary, the 'non-support' group of respondents were primarily concerned with:

- The local environmental risks and impact on wildlife, birds, and their natural habitat, from building the turbines to the potential destruction of local animal habitats, noise disturbance for wildlife, and the potential dangers of the turbines' blades if they cross bird flight paths.
- The impact on locals regarding the visual impact and noise disturbances (including infrasound/vibrations) from wind turbines, and concern that these may negatively impact on the natural beauty and tranquillity of the area. As these are concerns that would affect locals more than anyone else, it is unsurprising that they were voiced most strongly among the local residents (e.g. Golden Beach, Paradise Beach, and Loch Sport) as reasons for not supporting the wind farm.
- The impact on local amenities, which overlaps with those earlier mentioned visual and noise concerns, in addition to concerns about the potential devaluing of property prices, reduced tourism, and negative impact on locals' wellbeing. These reasons to be against the wind farm were also most prominently cited by residents living in towns nearby Dutson Downs (e.g., Golden/Paradise Beach, Loch Sport).
- The environmental costs of manufacturing, erecting, maintaining and disposing of the wind turbines.
- The need for the on-shore turbine with an already planned offshore wind farm.
- The impact on bills from the financial costs of the turbines, such as whether the wind farm will incur increased bills or other costs for customers or locals, particularly those who may be struggling financially as the cost of living tightens.
- Concern that the benefits of the wind farm (eg. reliable energy, cheaper energy or water bills) won't be passed on to locals and customers.
- Whether wind farms are the best renewable energy source for Dutson Downs and concerns that alternatives have not been adequately considered, with further concerns about the reliability of wind turbines to produce consistent energy when there is no wind.

These themes are described in further detail in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Concerns about a wind farm at Dutson Downs.

Theme/Concern	Example comments
<p>1) Negative impact on the local wildlife and their habitats - including birds and their Ramsar-listed wetlands habitat.</p> <p>Most of the respondents who were against the wind farm and provided their reasoning were concerned that the wind farm could harm local wildlife and destroy their habitats. They were most concerned about local birds living in nearby wetlands - which, according to some respondents, are Ramsar-listed and close to the Dutson Down area. They were also concerned that ducks fly through the potential wind farm area and may be killed or injured by the turbines. Additional concerns included the impact on waterfowl breeding areas, the potential impact of noise and vibrations on wildlife, and fire danger from turbines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Wind turbines are a serious danger to wildlife. Birds, bats are injured or killed by the blades. The habitat of wildlife on the ground is affected and can be driven out by the noise and vibration from the turbines."</i> • <i>"Proximity of RAMSAR listed wetlands and other wetlands in the area, flight paths of ducks and other birds that utilise these wetlands, eyesore to the landscape. Noise pollution from the wind turbines."</i> • <i>"...May cause bushfires in an already bushfire sensitive area due to windmill fires..."</i>
<p>2) Negative impact on the visual beauty of the local landscape.</p> <p>Many respondents who are against the wind farm were concerned about the visual impact of the turbines, as well as their transmission lines. Many indicated that the turbines will destroy the visual beauty of the surrounding landscape, reducing the appeal of the local area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"[They will] destroy our beautiful landscape..."</i> • <i>"They are ugly"</i> • <i>"[They are an] eyesore, and destroy the relaxing and appealing part of why people come to 90 mile beach..."</i> • <i>"[They] destroy visual amenity. All wind turbines should be off shore, out of sight..."</i>
<p>3) The noise generated by the turbines.</p> <p>Noise generated by wind turbines was a major concern for many respondents opposed to a wind farm. They were concerned about how far the noise might be heard and the impact of 'infrasound' and sonic vibrations on locals' health and wellbeing. Some respondents were interested in seeing research demonstrating that the noise and vibrations generated won't negatively impact the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The sonic vibrations generated by the turbines will have a destructive effect within the area in which they operate. Sonic vibrations travel through earth material and also etheric material. They diminish the bonded layers and will eventually destroy the cohesion between the things that we can see with our eyes and the things that are harder to see with our eyes. A study would need to be performed (in an existing area - showing results of the energy fields (possibly) diminished in plant life/animal life around the area where similar turbines are located."</i>

Theme/Concern	Example comments
<p>4) The negative environmental impact of the turbines across their lifespan, particularly their end-of-life disposal.</p> <p>Many respondents were concerned about the negative environmental impacts of the wind turbines over the lifespan of this equipment.</p> <p>Respondents were concerned that the wind farm's benefits will be outweighed by the environmental costs to the environment necessary to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source materials for the turbines • Manufacture the turbines and erect them at the site, including pollution caused by concrete at the site • Maintain and operate the turbines, including the use of fossil fuels to start the turbines, and ancillary use of fossil fuels and other energy for the site (e.g. transporting materials, equipment, and personnel) • Dispose of the turbines at end-of-life, with concern that their materials are not recyclable and will end up in a landfill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...That the materials they use for wind farms are not sustainable, and ultimately end in landfill as many parts cannot be recycled without detriment to the environment..." • "The fact the Wind turbine need so many materials to be manufactured that it defines the reasoning. WE destroy the environment to save it?" • "They are a short term fix. There is no safe way to dispose of old windmill parts. They use and spill oil."
<p>5) Impact on residents, including potential for downward pressure on property prices, reduced tourism, and interference with the general lifestyle and health of locals.</p> <p>Several respondents were concerned about the general impact on locals (e.g., residents of Golden Beach, Paradise Beach and Loch Sport) from noise and vibrations generated by the turbines and their visual impact on the landscape. A smaller group of respondents were concerned that a wind farm might worsen a nearby smell from a waste disposal area.</p> <p>These local impacts included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced tourism • Devalued property prices • Disruption to general lifestyle and health, with some respondents noting the general proximity of the wind farm to residential areas (e.g. Golden Beach) • Potential danger from blades (e.g. 'snapping off' in high winds and injuring someone) • Interference with local air space • Concern that it won't be Australian-made and operated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Value of my property decreasing. Noise. And eye sore." • "Noise and visual pollution of the surrounding area and coastal environment impacting the Golden and Paradise Beach community." • "Golden Beach and surrounds Will not be a place for people wanting to holiday at. Depreciation of land value. Drive away tourism and an absolute eye sore to the whole area. People vacation for the seaside views, beauty, wildlife, sealife, peace/quiet and tranquillity, not to view windmills/farm. It will potentially drive away long-term residents/investors/holidaymakers and those who were looking to move to Golden Beach." • "...Onshore wind farms cause adverse health effects to near by residents. They cause headaches, tinnitus, and heart palpitations, just to name a few..." • "The eyesore, noise and interruption to our natural beauty will be damaging. With proposed offshore wind farms also, Golden Beach would be surrounded by wind farms, so: 1. This will impact tourism to the area - who would want to take a beach holiday to Golden Beach/Paradise Beach that is surrounded by wind farms? Local airbnbs, hotels and tourist spots will be severely impacted. 2. Residents will be severely impacted - again per point 1, with windfarms on and offshore, residents will be surrounded by turbines. House prices will fall, residents will likely move away, rates of income will go down for the Council 3. Overall destruction of the natural environment - the pristine 90-mile beach area will be so badly impacted by the eyesore of the turbines that it will lose its natural pristine and charm as a small natural wonder" • "Also, in extremely high winds, the blades snap off and kill people nearby"

Theme/Concern	Example comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Any wind farm in the area (including the one off the coast) will hinder all local airspace users.”
<p>6) Some concerns that benefits (e.g. reduced costs) wouldn’t be passed on to locals or customers.</p> <p>Many respondents were concerned that the benefits of the wind farm wouldn't be passed on or made available to locals or customers. These benefits include water/energy bill reductions from cheaper power generation and reduced operating costs, access to more reliable power from the wind farm, and employment opportunities for local residents.</p>	<p>“Even if there were to be any minor efficiencies, they will not be passed on to the consumer (they almost never are). Hence the vague, non-committal wording used in the pitch.”</p>
<p>7) Concerns that the financial costs will outweigh benefits</p> <p>Respondents were concerned that the wind farm's benefits won't be worth incurring the financial costs - including the cost of planning, building, and operating the wind farm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “...They are costly and have a high failure rate and only last 20 years...” “The financial benefit is direct back into the operation such that there was a real effect on costs. It has to be a clear monetary benefit.” “Set up costs might outweigh the future savings on power costs”
<p>8) There may be better alternatives, with concerns about danger from wind farms, and off-shore turbines already planned.</p> <p>Respondents mentioned an upcoming offshore wind farm near the local area (Golden Beach). They questioned whether they needed another wind farm nearby and whether other alternatives, like a solar farm, would be better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We have windfarms coming up off shore at Golden Beach and we don't want any more” “Seek alternatives and have them 15+ km out in the ocean (floating). Using floating technology.” “I think there are better options for this area it is near national park and a beautiful holiday spot.” “Why is it even considered when solar can be used. solar is not intrusive like turbines” “I feel they should just plant more trees.” “However why not go for a solar panel farm???”
<p>9) General need for more information, research, and transparency, to demonstrate why the community should support a wind farm at Dutson Downs</p> <p>Respondents expressed a desire for more information about expected benefits, impacts, and the wind farm's operation, to address their concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Noise, visual impact Given the limited information so far provided it is difficult to provide a more fuller explanation. However why not go for a solar panel farm???” “What do you determine as additional information? Transparency on all documentation from stakeholders, political interests. Financial and other. Plans, drawings, environmental studies. How and when are you transparently communicating with community? What company have you contracted to delegate information? Will there be any cost in any way to communities affected. Tax. Rates GST. Other yearly payments?” “Have environmental studies been done at all in the area you want to utilise? You have not shown any information as to the infrastructure that will be required. Have any studies been done on the affect of the local residents? Loch Sport, Golden Beach and surrounds.” “Information on how environmental conditions will be managed & costings of the project versus projected savings on future power costs and lifespan of the turbines. How often

Theme/Concern	Example comments
	<p><i>they will need to be replaced.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“How many towers are planned? How many kW would the wind farm produce? Along route is proposed for the transmission line from the wind farm? Where would this transmission line connect into the grid? Wind farms cannot operate without using petroleum products. For example, all the equipment that transports and constructs the turbines. _Each_ wind turbine needs 80 gallons of polyalphaolefin oil annually; PAO oil is made from ethylene gas, so is still crude oil/natural gas dependent. Steel, which is produced with coal and natural gas, is needed in the foundations, the towers, and the rotor hubs and nacelles. And let's not get started on the plastics. WHY AREN'T YOU CONSIDERING NUCLEAR? That is true clean energy.”</i>

Reasons for supporting the wind farm balanced against concerns if ‘undecided’

The reasons provided by the ‘undecided’ group to support, not support, or re-consider the wind farm at Dutson Downs were very similar to those expressed by the respondents who indicated their support or non-support. Many of the ‘undecideds’ felt positive about the wind farm’s potential environmental benefits through renewable energy. But, for the most part, the support and enthusiasm of this group were highly contingent on

- 1) Addressing their concerns about the negative impacts of the wind farm, including environmental, financial, and local. These concerns were similar to respondents who did not support the wind farm and those that supported it but still had some concerns.
- 2) Further detailed information about the planned wind farm and its impact and benefits, including strong expert evidence and reporting on the potential impact of the wind farm on locals, wildlife and birds, wildlife habitats, the environment more generally (including emissions produced by the manufacturing, building, and disposal of the turbines), and costs/benefits analyses.

Five common concerns of the ‘undecided’ group are outlined in Table 8 (below).

Table 8. Reasons to support a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs and associated concerns indicated by respondents who were undecided.

Theme/Reason for support or caveat	Example comments
<p>1) Support contingent on nil or minimal impact on residents and their way of life.</p> <p>Many of the 'undecided' respondents indicated support contingent on minimal impact on residents, including nil or minimal noise levels, impact on the visual landscape, and changes to the general way of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Project must show no impacts eg noise, flicker, etc" • "I feel that aesthetically the huge wind towers are a blight on the natural beauty of our landscapes." • "I have travelled Australia and lived on the road for 10 years in a large Motorhome and in that time have viewed many similar developments and I can honestly say I never saw one that wasn't a blight on the scenic value of the area. Well your site will be viewable from any adjoining road or public space." • "It looks over-bearing on the landscape. It doesn't provide enough energy to sacrifice the beauty of the area." • "being a very close home and farm owner to the proposed wind farm site, I will require a lot more detailed information on how the proposed wind farm will impact on my home, farm and lifestyle before I would be happy to support the proposal...the last thing I personally will support is further encroachment or impact on my home and farm by yet another industry, due to 'my neighbours' desire to move to 100% renewable energy" • "When a wind farm is being proposed in an area other than where I live, I think oh that's fine. Of course it would be a different matter for people that it would impact, so alot to consider" • "The small 90 mile beach township areas are peaceful havens which are sought out generally by quiet people wanting immersion in nature. They are unique in Victoria and special exactly because they are not busy overpopulated flashy places. This must be kept in mind before any permanent alteration to the landscape and environment is made."
<p>2) Support contingent on financial net financial benefits and those benefits being passed on to locals/customers.</p> <p>Respondents indicated that residents must receive financial benefits from the wind farm, including reduced water/energy bills, without incurring additional costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cost of Water rates increasing to fund it" • "I am all for renewable energy. However, I do not support this if it will increase our water rates. They are already very high as it is" • "Costs to build. Who is funding it? Will some of the power go back into the grid for the communities?" • "Cost of production and installation vs benefits." • "I own a property in Golden Beach and would like to understand a lot more about the project proposed to have an informed opinion...Who will benefit from the green energy created? I am a bit confused about the overall benefit of the proposal to Wellington Shire..."
<p>3) Support contingent on minimal or no harm to wildlife (especially birds) and their natural habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bush clearance is not acceptable in an ecosystem already under extreme stress. Minimising the impact of wind turbines on wildlife is critical." "Key concerns would be potential impacts on fauna in an area in close proximity to the Gippsland Lakes; particularly migratory bird species (national and international)." • "Impacts on fauna including raptors, migratory birds including Orange-bellied Parrots and waders. Viability of wind farms" • "Potential injury and death of birds"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Upsetting hog deer and waterbird habitat"</i>
<p>4) Support contingent on a net-positive environmental impact that would be better than alternatives.</p> <p>With greater planning to manage potential negative environmental impacts and evidence to provide greater certainty. Many respondents mentioned that they need to know that there's an end-of-life plan to dispose of wind farm assets (e.g. wind turbines).</p> <p>Many were also concerned that wind farms at Dutson Down are redundant because there are already off-shore wind farms planned nearby.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I would also need to see a life cycle plan for the project which incorporates disposal of redundant assets."</i> • <i>"I am not convinced that the entire life cycle of wind farms is sufficiently "green" to warrant expansion of wind farms at this time."</i> • <i>"They are going to build offshore wind turbines as well"</i> • <i>"Will it replace off-shore"</i> • <i>"If it was to replace the ones off the shoreline of Golden Beach I'd be fine with it but why have both in one place."</i>
<p>5) Energy transmission lines</p> <p>A small number of respondents were concerned about whether there were plans for the energy transmission lines, including whether the existing infrastructure was adequate and whether new transmission lines would be above or below ground.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Dutson is a site which will impact minimal people, however such a project will need adequate transmission lines. Are existing infrastructure capable of feeding generated power into the grid?"</i> • <i>"Decentralised generation in my opinion will add significant impact with either underground or overhead assets required to transport the energy back to the grid."</i> • <i>"How far away are transmission lines to collect the power generated. Would it be sufficiently isolated so that it would not trouble people who live in that area."</i> • <i>"What route do the transmission lines take."</i>

Further information needs

Beyond specific concerns and caveats, the ‘undecided’ group expressed a greater desire than other groups to better understand the issues involved, including the potential benefits weighed against the negative impacts of a wind farm at Dutson Downs, before they form an opinion. Four types of information were most important for this group: 1) Detailed information about the wind farm itself; 2) Comprehensive costs/benefits analyses, evidenced with independent empirical research and assessments of alternatives (e.g., solar farm, hydro-electricity, a nuclear plant); 3) Financial information including some guarantee of the benefits to customers/locals; and 4) Evidence that it wouldn’t negatively impact residents. However, many respondents who were against the wind farm, and to a lesser degree, respondents who supported it, wanted further information to understand its potential negative impacts, costs and benefits fully.

Four key informational needs are presented in Table 9, below.

Table 9. Community information needs regarding a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs.

Theme/Information need	Example comments
<p>1) Detailed general information about the potential wind farm</p> <p>Respondents needed further information about the plan for the wind farm, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines for its development and construction. • The size of the wind farm regarding the equipment to be used, including the number and size of the wind turbines to be erected on site. • The precise locations of the turbines. • The sources of funding for the wind farm. • The stakeholders to be involved (including who will lease the land). • How the site will be operated and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As much as you are able to provide, in layman's terms please." • "Full detailed proposal." • "Unsure/need more info in general." • "Well I would need more info regarding my queries before I would support it." • "Not enough information - I don't have enough information to determine if I have concerns." • "I would like to understand more about the project...cost analysis & project timeframe & who will undertake the project." • "It isn't clear if Gippsland Water or another party will fund and build the wind farm." • "[Information] regarding number of turbines, proximity to my home/farm, distance from my home to the closest proposed structure, noise pollution/Health concerns, where will access be gained to develop this proposed wind farm site?, will it increase ongoing heavy vehicle traffic, dust, noise, activity, congestion to operate and maintain the structures of the wind farm." • "How many wind turbines? How much of the land? How close to township/residential? Aesthetics?" • "My concerns are the negative impacts which may or may not exist with the establishment of a wind farm. Once again, it would be good to know what these are so we are able to make an informed decision." • "I agree with renewable energy, and as part of that wind energy. A couple of concerns in that area, the turbines are incapable of working when there are winds over a certain velocity, 1. is this not an area of the coast which this would occur, so therefore how viable is it? 2. There is a lake wildlife reserve adjacent to this property, which must mean that there is a multitude of species supported in that area for it to be a state park recognised area, in fact it is surrounded by wet area, would this therefore be implausible with other species management? 3. Why can't you use wave energy at this location?" • "Which company is leasing the land."

2) Comprehensive environmental, financial, and local cost/benefit analyses over the wind farm's lifespan, conducted independently, to determine its viability and the net impact against alternatives.

Respondents indicated a strong desire for comprehensive costs/benefits to detail the net balance of benefits and negative impacts to determine whether the wind farm is worthwhile, including

1. An empirical and independent assessment of the potential local and broader impacts on the planet - both positive and negative - over the end-to-end lifecycle of the wind farm and its equipment in this location. Including but not limited to the environmental costs of manufacturing turbines and source materials, building the wind farm, how long the wind turbines will last, net return for the environment and energy output, end-of-life disposal of materials, and loss of land for the environment.
2. An empirical and independent environmental assessment of the potential negative impacts on the surrounding wildlife and their habitats, the landscape, and fauna.
3. Evidence of the benefits for the local area and its residents (e.g. financial returns, employment opportunities, improvements to local landscape and wildlife conservation)
4. Assessment of the potential negative impacts on the local area and its residents (eg any health impacts, noise/infra-noise, vibrations, visual impact, any financial costs, and other disruptions)

In addition, respondents recommended evaluating the potential wind farm against other possible alternatives (e.g. solar, wave energy, bio-digesters, nuclear power, and other energy sources) to decide whether a wind farm is the best option, all costs/benefits considered.

- *"Needs to be way more research done first."*
- *"End to end lifecycle analysis of wind farms that proves they are the best option for this and other locations (including materials used to manufacture, end of life issues, loss of land issues, impact on wildlife, impact on land, alternatives considered etc)."*
- *"A comprehensive report providing research on environmental & wildlife impact as well as a business case with full analysis."*
- *"I would support a wind farm if I could be convinced that the cost of producing the materials to build & install the windfarm plus the negative impact on the environment were of greater environmental benefit than proceeding."*
- *"Has there been any survey to ensure there is sufficient wind at that site to make the farm worthwhile."*
- *"A financial business case for the proposed wind farm - considering financial costs, how it will be funded, and expected financial outputs (including reduced costs, and other financial benefits like employment opportunities)."*
- *"I agree 100% that using renewable energy is the way forward. However I would like to see the results of independent research into the impacts on local wildlife prior to making my decision to support or oppose a wind farm at the site."*
- *"While I'm very much for alternative power sources, I'm not convinced that wind is the way to go."*
- *"Has a capability study been done into what the birds will think? How will the sea Eagles adapt? Would solar be a better alternative?"*
- *"...not enough empirical research regarding wildlife plus are turbines cost-effective, would solar be a better option?"*
- *"Have other options been considered such as bio-digesters to capture and utilise methane gas; or a combination of wind turbines and bio-digesters."*

3) Demonstrate and guarantee financial viability, transparency, and positive financial benefits for customers and locals, without increased costs

- *"Understanding is costs and funding be transparent with costs."*
- *"It would have to be clear that the wind farm "would" and not may (as stated), reduce my bill."*
- *"Generating income on land owned by the Government and vested in Gippsland Water*

<p>In addition to being considered in the costs/benefits of a wind farm, many respondents indicated that they needed to know with greater certainty that they would financially benefit from the wind farm (e.g. reduced water or energy bills) and that they would not incur financial costs as a result of the wind farm development.</p> <p>Respondents also expressed a desire for financial transparency from Gippsland Water and other stakeholders, where customers can understand who benefits financially from the wind farms, and how,</p>	<p><i>belongs to the public, the customers in this case and the rewards should be transparently returned to us all."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Well for a start you could drop the charges we pay you. We have to supply the tank water and electricity for the pressure sewage system to work here in Loch Sport. Where / what does the quarterly payment we pay Gippsland Water go to?"</i> • <i>"Guarantee that rates wouldn't increase."</i> • <i>"If you guaranteed all income would be disclosed and a flow on in reduced charges to GW customers resulted, then go for it. If not, then no."</i> • <i>"Tell me who is benefits & how."</i> • <i>"In principle the idea is sound. I would like to be convinced that the project stacks up economically and is not just a "thought bubble"."</i>
<p>4) Evidence that locals will not be negatively impacted, with further community consultation conducted</p> <p>Local residents wanted evidence showing that they won't be negatively impacted by the wind farm, including any noise from the turbines, their visual impact on the landscape, any impact on local property values, and the locals' lifestyle in general. Some respondents also wanted further public consultation, particularly with local land owners, traditional owners, and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I'm happy for a wind farm, so long as it doesn't impact local residents in particular."</i> • <i>"If I know there will not be a noise issue that would go a long way to changing my mind, I will not hold my breath as we can do nothing about the offshore ones."</i> • <i>"...I will require a lot more detailed information on how the proposed wind farm will impact on my home, farm and lifestyle before I would be happy to support the proposal... [including] noise pollution/Health concerns?...Will it increase ongoing heavy vehicle traffic, dust, noise, activity, congestion to operate and maintain the structures of the wind farm?"</i> • <i>"Would it be sufficiently isolated so that it would not trouble people who live in that area."</i> • <i>"A lot more additional research due diligence and public consultation to be conducted" [Respondent in 'against' group].</i>

Finally, the information 'undecided' group may also gain support from those who indicated they did not support the wind farms or even in favour of them, to make an even more informed decision and to more deeply understand the potential costs and benefits for all local communities, the local environment, and the broader environment. Similar to the 'undecided' group, some respondents in the 'against' group indicated that their opinions may change if they were presented with specific information, including:

- More details about the wind farm itself - including how many turbines could be built, and more detailed maps with roads showing potential location
- The noise (decibels) that might be produced by the wind farm, and how far that noise might travel
- Expected impact on local house values
- Research and evidence into the environmental costs and benefits, including evidence that wildlife and nature in the area won't be negatively impacted - in consultation with ESSO and the RAAF, and the reliability of wind farms
- Research and evidence into the financial costs and benefits
- Examples of success from other countries/areas.
- Detailed plans, including an end-of-life plan for recycling or repurposing the turbines once they are no longer useful or needed.

Other things that 'against' respondents indicated could change the minds of those who were against the wind farm included:

- Other alternative power generation options for the area, including alternative renewable energy options such as solar power, hydro, and even nuclear, considering the impact on the local townships for each.
- Demonstrate a clear financial benefit of the wind farm for the community
- Some indicated that it must not impact the locals and the local area at all; some residents of Golden Beach/Paradise Beach specifically mentioned that there needs to be no impact on that area, including no noise or visual disturbances.
- Several respondents, particularly those residing in the Golden Beach/Paradise Beach area closer to the Dutson Downs area, suggested moving the potential location elsewhere, away from these townships near the currently indicated potential site.

Collated insights

Across all the engagement activities, most participants supported a wind farm at Dutson Downs, alongside a significant proportion who were against it.

As an indicator of sentiments across the community, the survey indicated a ratio of 2:1 in favour of a wind farm. The survey may provide a more accurate and balanced impression of sentiments across the community, whereas the feedback in the in-person sessions and focus groups were more likely to have been positively influenced by social desirability bias compared to the anonymous survey.

Critically, participants of the in-person sessions, focus groups, the survey, as well as those who commented on the Gippsland Water Facebook page, regardless of whether they were for, against, and undecided about the project, expressed similar expected benefits, concerns, and a need for further information.

All of these aspects should be carefully considered together to inform further consultation activities and any decision-making for this project.

Before summarising these key insights, it is important to note that the sentiments expressed in these engagement activities may be negatively skewed compared to the broader community, for at least two reasons:

- 1) A 'stop the wind farm at Dutson Downs' petition on change.org (and associated Facebook group) appeared shortly after this initial consultation began. The petition provided only negative messaging about a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs, and may have swayed the opinions expressed by some community members in the survey and other engagement activities.
 - The impact of this petition on the survey findings cannot be quantified. But, it's highly likely to have inflated the number of negative responses to some degree.
 - As noted earlier in this report, Gippsland Water entered into these very early consultations as an impartial entity, intending to understand the community's genuine views regardless of whether they were positive or negative. In this spirit, they did not address the petition its negative messaging with any debate or provision of factual evidence in support of the wind farm, so that any feedback from the community would remain authentic.
 - Even though Gippsland Water remained impartial in the engagement process, the majority of the participants and survey respondents supported the idea of a wind farm at Dutson Downs. Those who were undecided (and some who were against) indicated that if Gippsland Water addresses their concerns with information and evidence, they were likely to change their mind in support of the project.
- 2) Building facilities in the area to address broader environmental issues is an emotive topic for locals, and so the engagement activities may have attracted people who already feel negatively, particularly from nearby areas, including Golden Beach, Paradise Beach, and Loch Sport.

- Some residents were weary of a Dutson Downs wind farm, commenting that their area is already a ‘dumping ground’ with an existing waste disposal facility and an already planned off-shore wind farm. As one commenter posted on Gippsland Water’s Facebook page: “Dutson... minimal landfill miles...it’s already a toxic dump”.
- Related local community concerns include job losses from coal power plant closures and a powerful motivation to preserve the local way of life and natural environment, including the local wildlife and their Ramsar-listed wetland habitats.

The perceived potential benefits were relatively clear, even among some participants who were against the wind farm, including:

- **Broad environmental benefits**, providing a renewable energy source to address climate change and supply more consistent energy to locals
- **Good location and use of land at Dutson Downs**, though some residents living in communities located closer to Dutson Downs disagreed.
- **Potential financial returns for locals, with reduced water or energy bills.**
- **Economic and financial benefits for locals**, including reduced bills, with the potential to provide local jobs in the manufacturing, building, and maintenance/operation of the wind farm, particularly in the context of local job losses from fossil fuel plant closures.

Despite the potential benefits, **several concerns** about a potential wind farm came through strongly across all engagement activities. Community members who were ‘undecided’ on a wind farm indicated that these concerns must be addressed before they give their support, including:

- **Local impacts on the visual beauty and tranquillity of the landscape**, from noise and visual impact of the turbines. It was clear that many in the community won’t support a wind farm unless it has nil or minimal negative impact on residents and their way of life.
- **Local impacts on the environment**, including the local wildlife (particularly birds), and local nature and habitat areas (e.g. nearby Ramsar-listed wetlands).
- **Local impacts on amenities, which were of particular concern among residents of nearby communities (e.g. Paradise Beach, Golden Beach, and Loch Sport).** These respondents were concerned about reduced tourism, reduced property values, and the impacted lifestyle of residents. These concerns also include the potential impact on local First Nations communities.
- **Broad impact on the environment from the turbines across their lifespan**, considering carbon emissions and pollution generated through manufacturing, constructing, operating, and maintaining them, and their end-of-life disposal.
- **Safety concerns**, including fire danger from the turbines and physical danger if the turbine blades broke off in high winds.
- **Financial benefits may not be passed on to residents and Gippsland Water customers**, though a focus group participant questioned this concern because it must be considered for any alternatives, too.
- **Financial costs may outweigh its financial benefits (i.e., it may cost more money than it saves).**

Across all levels of support, community groups, and engagement activities (including focus groups, drop-in sessions, and a survey), the community was keen to understand more about what is being considered. The need for further information was expected because details have not been formed for this project. This engagement was conducted very early in the process to gauge initial reactions and views of the community before deciding whether to delve into detailed evaluations and planning.

At this stage, the community is keen for further information about:

- **Details and plans for a potential wind farm**, including its development, on-site equipment and turbine number/size, operation and maintenance, financial beneficiaries and funding sources, and much more.
- **Comprehensive and independent reports demonstrating the costs/benefits of a wind farm at the indicated potential location over its lifespan, with comparisons against alternatives**
- **Strong evidence that guarantees financial viability, transparency, and returns for customers and locals**
- **Evidence that locals won't be negatively impacted**
- **Further community consultations with the local communities.**

Providing the community with detailed information may also address potential mistrust from some community members. For instance, some drop-in session participants questioned the authenticity of the engagement process, citing concern that decisions won't consider their feedback, that the community wasn't notified of the engagement widely enough, and there was not enough information provided about the potential wind farm. Though these information gaps were expected to be of concern by some of the community, it reinforces the need for detailed information and certainty, particularly around any negative impacts and benefits (e.g., will the noise reach local towns? will the wind farm reduce water/energy costs and in turn reduce customers' bills?). It also reinforces the need to consider the emotive nature of this project, particularly for residents of local townships.

Overall, the community was genuinely interested in a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs, and highly invested in its potential. Conducting this early engagement helped strengthen Gippsland Water's relationship with the community, demonstrating transparency, trust and respect through an open process. The questions and issues raised throughout the engagement activities - including the focus groups, public drop-in sessions, and the survey - were generally insightful. Altogether, the insights demonstrated a thorough overview of important considerations, balancing the great potential for benefits with the potential for negative impacts and other concerns.

Appendices

Appendix A: Focus group presentation

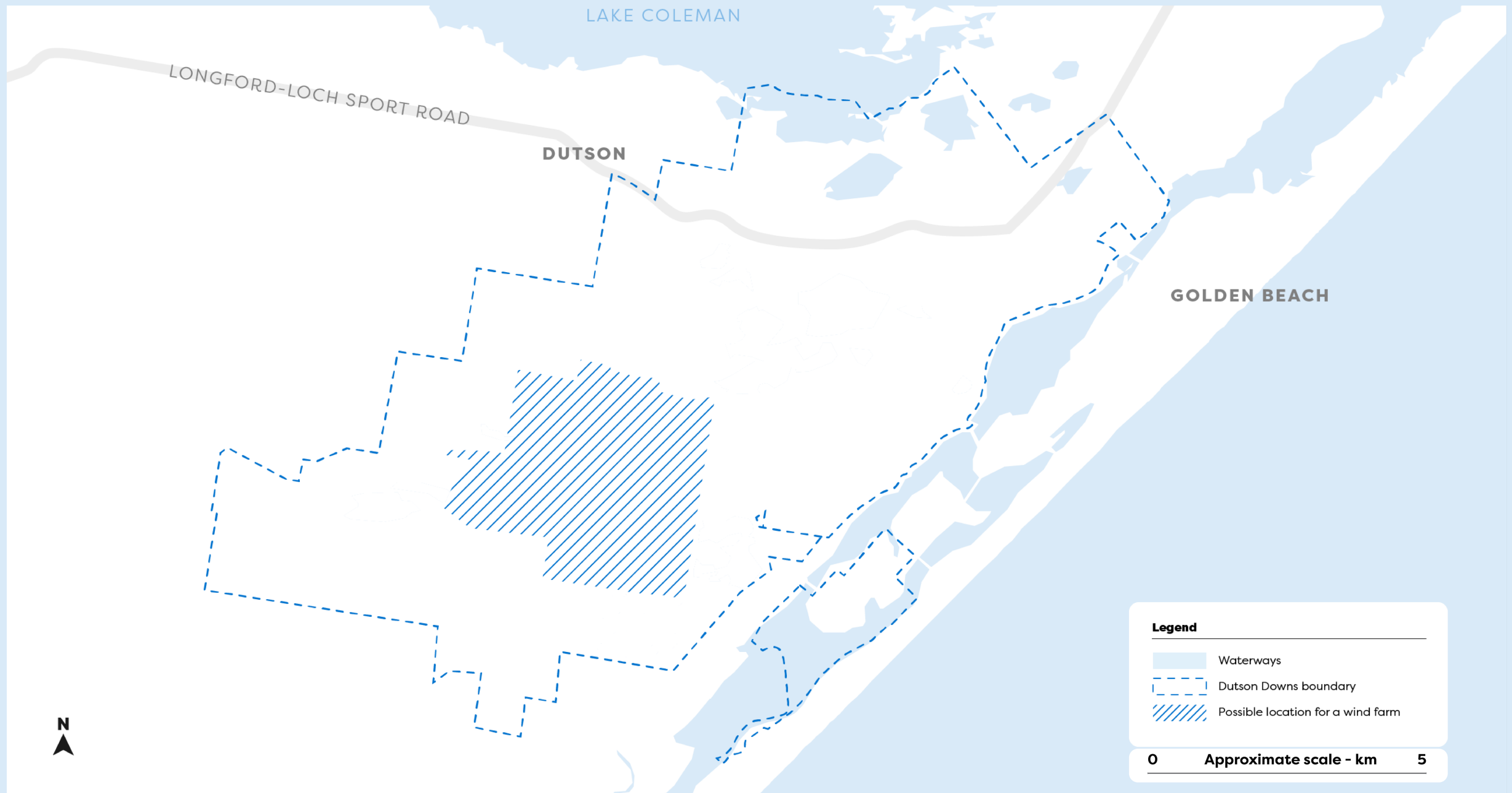
Dutson Downs Wind Farm Focus Group

A potential wind farm for Dutson Downs



Possible location

Gippsland Water is currently investigating the feasibility of building or hosting a wind farm at Dutson Downs - near Golden Beach, and about 30 km southeast of Sale.



What is the property used for now?

Current operations at the Dutson Downs property include:

- Gippsland Regional Organics - An EPA licensed waste treatment and compost facility
- Gippsland Regional Agribusiness - Managing cattle and crops
- Carbon offset plantings - mass plantations of native trees to balance - or offset - carbon emissions.

Note: Gippsland Water will continue to use the Dutson Downs property for Gippsland Regional Organics and Agribusiness activities, regardless of whether or not a wind farm is established there.



Why consider a Wind Farm?

- Treating and distributing water uses a huge amount of energy
- All Victorian water corporations must meet an ambitious climate target - that all operations are 100% powered by renewable energy by 2025
- Gippsland Water has committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030.



How might this benefit Gippsland Water customers?



By reducing Gippsland Water's operating costs, there could be a downward pressure on bills.

There are also potential benefits for the community – with the potential to boost the local economy.



How will we make the decision?

What's already happened?



We've committed to moving to 100% renewable energy by 2025



We've done early research that shows a wind farm could help us get there

What's happening now?



Take our survey: your feedback is at the centre of every decision we make



Tell us what you think: fill in our survey, join our online event, or call or email us



Our commitment to you: everyone in the local community and our customers will have the opportunity to have their say

What happens next?



We consider your feedback in our decision making



We'll continue to investigate and keep you informed about what we do next

What do Gippsland Water customers think?

Ultimately, the decision on how Gippsland Water will achieve its green energy and carbon emission targets will consider customer value, cost, feasibility and community sentiment.

- The decision to build a wind farm has not been made.
- It's vital that we understand what Gippsland Water customers and the local community think first.
- The discussions had during this community consultation phase will help inform Gippsland Water's decisions moving forward.

Remember: There are no right or wrong answers.
This is a safe space to share your honest thoughts.

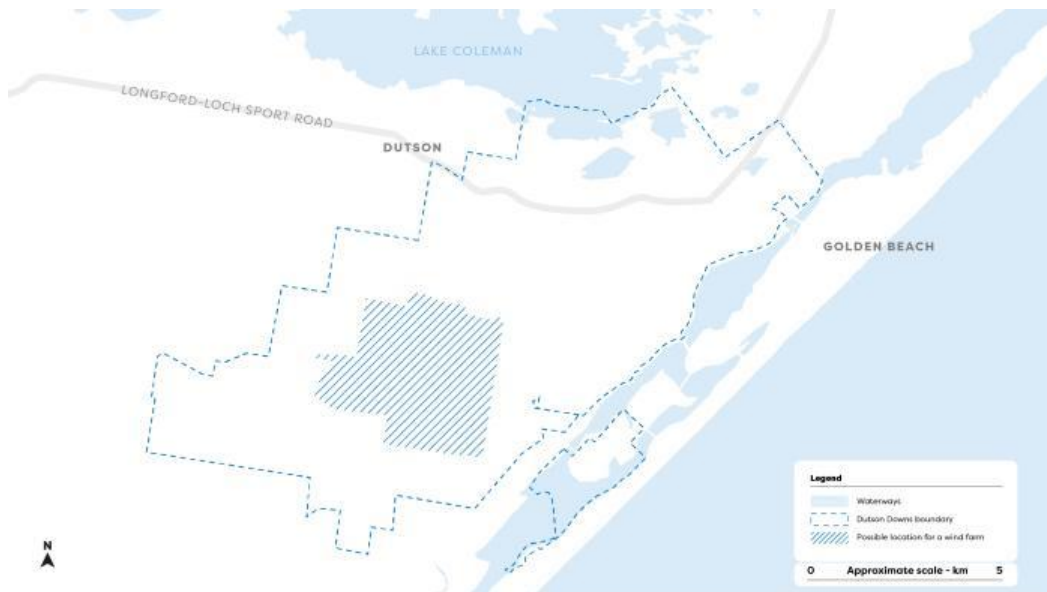
Thank you



Appendix B: Survey questionnaire

Have your say: How do you feel about a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs?

We want to know what you think about the possibility of building or hosting a wind farm at the Dutson Downs property that we manage. The striped area on the map below indicates the area being considered for a potential wind farm:



Why are we considering a potential wind farm at Dutson Downs?

We're committed to moving to 100% renewable energy by 2025. We're working hard to reach this target in a way that benefits both our customers and our local community. There's been a lot of interest in wind farms in our community recently. Establishing a wind farm could help to reduce our operating costs and may put downward pressure on customer Gippsland Water bills.

For more information visit www.gippswater.com.au/windfarm-survey

To complete this survey click the 'next page' button below. All the information you provide is anonymous and will be kept completely confidential.

-
- Q1. Do you think Gippsland Water should consider making land available at its Dutson Downs site to either build or host a wind farm?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Undecided
 - d. No opinion
- Q2. Please describe your main reasons for supporting making land available at Dutson Downs for a wind farm. If undecided or unsure, please describe why you might support it. _____
- Q3. What are your concerns about a wind farm at Dutson Downs? _____

- Q4. What would change your mind to support a wind farm at Dutson Downs? Please also indicate any additional information that you might need. _____
- Q5. What is your relationship to the Gippsland region?
- a. My main place of residence is in Gippsland
 - b. I own a holiday home in Gippsland
 - c. I'm a visitor to Gippsland - Please indicate the town in which you normally live: _____
 - d. I'm a local business operator - Please indicate the town in which you normally live, if outside Gippsland: _____
 - e. Other/Not-listed (please indicate) _____
- Q6. Are you a customer of Gippsland Water?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I'm not sure
- Q7. In which town is your primary Gippsland address? _____
- Q8. How old are you?
- a. 16-20 years
 - b. 21-30 years
 - c. 31-40 years
 - d. 41-50 years
 - e. 51-60 years
 - f. 61-70 years
 - g. 71+ years
- Q9. Considering your household income, which of the following options most accurately completes this sentence:
"My household income means that I/we...."
- a. Don't have enough to meet basic expenses
 - b. Just meet basic expenses
 - c. Meet basic expenses with a little left over for extras
 - d. Live comfortably financially
 - e. I'd prefer not to answer
- Q10. To which gender do you most identify?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Prefer not to answer