

Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 – Registrar’s report

The *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* (OEI Act) provides the legislative framework for licensing and regulating offshore electricity infrastructure in Commonwealth waters.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has policy responsibility for the OEI Act and associated regulations.

The OEI Act establishes the statutory position of the Offshore Infrastructure Registrar (Registrar).

In December 2022, the Secretary of DCCEEW appointed the General Manager of the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA) Branch within the Department of Industry, Science and Resources as the Registrar under section 153 of the OEI Act.

The Registrar provides information, assessments, analysis, reports and recommendations to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy on licensing decisions under the OEI Act, undertakes compliance monitoring and maintains a register of licences. The Registrar is also the decision maker for the approval of a change in control of a licence holder under the OEI Act.

The registrar operates on a cost recovery basis, funded by the offshore electricity industry.

As per section 159 of the OEI Act, the Registrar must present the Minister for Climate Change and Energy with an annual report outlining its activities for the previous financial year to present to Parliament.

Registrar’s activity report for 2024–25

In 2024–25, the Offshore Infrastructure Registrar:

- received, assessed and provided advice to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy in relation to;
 - one feasibility licence application received in response to the invitation to apply for the Southern Ocean Declared Area OEI-01-2024, which closed on 2 July 2024
 - one feasibility licence application received in response to the invitation to apply for the Illawarra Declared Area OEI-02-2024, which closed on 15 August 2024
 - 4 feasibility licence applications received in response to the invitation to apply for Bunbury Declared Area OEI-03-2024, which closed on 30 January 2025
- initiated the management of the overlapping application group process under the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Regulations 2022* for 2 shortlisted feasibility licence applications
- provided advice to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy which led to decisions relating to 3 projects with the potential to generate a combined 4.7GW of electricity through;
 - the offer of one feasibility licence in the Hunter declared area OEI-01-2023
 - the grant of one feasibility licence in the Southern Ocean declared area OEI-01-2024
 - a preliminary decision to grant one feasibility licence in the Bunbury Declared Area OEI-03-2024
- received and commenced assessment of;
 - one feasibility licence application in response to the invitation to apply for the Bass Strait Declared Area OEI-04-2024, which closed on 10 April 2025
 - 5 annual reports submitted by licence holders, in accordance with section 33 of the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Regulations 2022*
 - 3 applications for changes in control of a licence holder
- supported procedural fairness processes to unsuccessful feasibility licence applicants
- maintained the Register of Offshore Infrastructure Licences under section 162 of the OEI Act, available at neats.nopta.gov.au
- collaborated with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on the implementation of the licensing framework, resulting in updates to relevant legislation and regulations
- developed regulatory guidance material to foster compliance with the OEI Act
- assisted DCCEEW to finalise the transmission and infrastructure licence Guideline chapter
- participated in over 350 interactions with the offshore electricity infrastructure industry on administrative, operational and regulatory matters (in 2024-25 the methodology for capturing stakeholder interactions was updated)
- expanded the functionality of NEATS to allow for electronic submission of transfers and change in control applications
- commenced a refresh of the Registrar website.