

The Golden Beach Gas Project

Marine Environment

The Golden Beach Gas Project (Project) involves the development of the Golden Beach Gas Field in the Gippsland Basin to provide critical gas supply and storage infrastructure that will materially benefit the Victorian energy market.

Once in operation, the Project will initially increase the domestic gas supply before transitioning to storage operations which will enhance the energy market security and efficiency while supporting Victoria's transition to renewables.

Environmental Effects Statement Process

The Minister for Planning determined that an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) is required for the Project under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. The EES process is underway and is assessing any potential environmental, social, economic and planning impacts of the Project. An EES will be prepared setting out these assessments and our approach to mitigating any impacts.

As part of the EES process, an assessment of the impact of the Project on the marine environment has been undertaken. GB Energy has prepared this fact sheet to explain the marine environment assessment and welcomes any feedback. The final report will be made available for comment through the EES public exhibition process anticipated in late 2020.

Marine Environment

Specialists have completed an assessment of the potential marine environment impacts associated with the Project. The study will provide guidance on how to minimise any negative impacts.

The assessment is based on the extensive literature and data available for the Project area and the region more broadly and industry experience in the Gippsland Basin. The assessment has also drawn on a number of physical surveys and habitat assessments undertaken in and around the Project area by GB Energy, the Victorian Government and other project proponents including a geophysical survey conducted in March 2020 to assess the seabed and highlight any potential hazards.

The assessment covered the following offshore phases of the Project:

- Drilling and wellhead installation
- Pipeline installation
- Gas extraction and injection (operations).

Key findings

The key findings of the marine environment assessment include:

- No sensitive receptors (such as rocky reefs, protected areas, cultural heritage sites, coastal townships) are likely to be significantly affected by the Project activities.
- Areas of sandy seabed that may be disturbed during the construction phase of the Project will recover to their pre-disturbed state quickly.
- Threatened species are migratory and do not permanently reside in the Project area.
- Drilling and pipeline installation are temporary activities.
- Protective structures will be in place to protect wells and fishing equipment. These also provide hard substrate habitat.
- The risks to the marine environment during the construction phase of the Project (drilling and pipeline installation) are temporary, highly localised and because of the low sensitivity of the Project area, range from 'very low' to 'low' risk.
- The risks during the operations phase being the presence of the subsea infrastructure and the infrequent and short-duration maintenance and repair activities have risk ratings ranging from 'very low' to 'low'.
- The interference and displacement for commercial fishing has also been assessed as very low to low.
- The mitigation and control measures that will be implemented are industry standard.