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# 'No time to lose' as rally supports offshore wind in the Hunter



By [Sage Swinton](#)

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The threat to marine life from climate change will be greater than the impact of offshore wind turbines, according to Doctors for the



unionists spoke in favour of constructing wind turbines off the Hunter coastline.

Dr Ewald said the effects of climate change were being felt now, and Australia "needs to get on with" transitioning to renewable energy.

"One-in-100 year floods are happening every year or two," he said.

"The severe drought that was happening five years ago, that was tied to climate change.

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Hunter Workers offshore wind rally  
Newcastle Herald

1:44

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"We're seeing incursions of tropical diseases that we never used to have, like Japanese encephalitis in NSW.

"The ways in which climate change is going to affect health are going to become more severe and more frequent.

"Heatwaves are a serious threat to people's health. In a hot and prolonged heatwave, people die.

"Burning coal is the principal cause of climate change and it's a health priority to get coal out of the electricity system as soon as possible and building wind farms is really the only pathway to get there





📷 Dr Ben Ewald. Picture by Jonathan Carroll

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said while he believed offshore wind needed further investigation, it should not be ruled out.

"Until we do the full investigation, understand the parameters of what's involved with that technology, we need to keep progressing," he said.

"We've got a lot of businesses up here that for historical reasons came to the Hunter because of the availability of reliable and affordable power.

"We don't want to lose that and if we do lose that it's not only individual jobs at risk, but businesses and potentially industries.

"We haven't got any time to lose and we appreciate there's a lot of unknown out there. We don't have offshore wind in Australia.

"We're supportive on the basis of the capacity and the capability it has





turning off with the non-renewable sources of energy."

Newcastle councillor and Wiradjuri woman Deahna Richardson spoke about the importance of transitioning to renewables for the Newcastle community.

"We know that the community wants this project," she said. "We know that we cannot continue to burn coal and ship coal out of the Port of Newcastle to the rest of the world, but we need to have a way forward for the workers in this community.

"We can't just one day shut down those power stations and shut down those coal mines. We need to have jobs for the future."



Cr Deahna Richardson. Picture by Jonathan Carroll

Steve Murphy from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union said the Hunter and other impacted communities "deserve" to have a say in the country's energy future.

Jo Lynch from the Hunter Community Environment Centre spoke about the impact of offshore wind turbines on migratory shorebirds, but said researchers had found no causal link between wind farms and beached whales.

"We need to establish alternative habitat for these birds before wind farms are in operation," she said.

Ms Lynch said the project needed to be developed responsibly, but that it was needed due to the threat of climate change.

"I think the *Herald* summed it up very nicely in Friday's article by saying that 'the environmental risks and impacts of offshore wind are real, but its responsible development in Australia will help combat climate change impacts and help protect fragile marine ecosystems'."

Jasmine Loades and Joanna Tavita from the Maritime Union of Australia spoke about what they believed offshore wind turbines would do for jobs and their industry.

"It means more work for us and more work for the region," Ms Tavita said.

"Wind turbines already work so well globally in China, the UK, so there's absolutely no reason why they wouldn't work here," Ms Loades said.

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**Sage Swinton**  
Journalist



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Sage Swinton is a news reporter who was born and bred in the Hunter. She has been with the Newcastle Herald since June 2020, and covers Newcastle council as well as other general news.

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