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Unions call for local content rules for offshore wind

By [Marion Rae](#)

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📷 A swathe of the Indian Ocean has been earmarked as a development zone for offshore wind farms. (Mick Tsikas/AAP PHOTOS)

Western Australia is joining the race to add offshore wind to a power network straining under the pressure of extreme heat but unions want stronger local content provisions.

A swathe of the Indian Ocean south of Perth was earmarked on Tuesday as a development zone to replace existing coal and gas generation.

Flotation Energy, developer of a proposed 1.5GW Sea Lion offshore wind farm, said WA has an "extremely valuable wind resource" and the zone could be deployed quickly to accelerate the growth of renewable energy.

✓ "The project will connect directly to local industrial users and the electrical transmission infrastructure, ensuring green and reliable

Before an offshore wind project can begin construction, it needs to be in a legally declared area, get a feasibility licence and commercial licence, and receive environmental approval.

The federal government is seeking feedback on a proposed area of 7674sq km that is 20km from shore at its closest point off Cape Naturaliste and Bunbury, an area known for its wild bottlenose dolphins and birdlife.

Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen said the zone could enable up to 20 gigawatts of offshore wind to be developed.

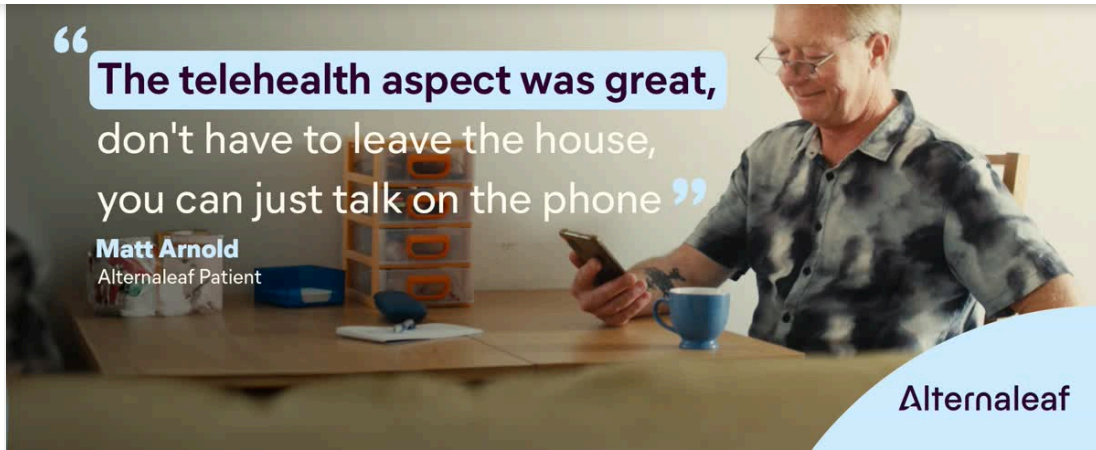
"Offshore wind will be a critical new clean energy industry for Western Australians as electricity demand increases, helping to provide thousands of jobs along the way," he said.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union said it was concerned the move would not deliver thousands of renewable energy jobs as envisaged.

Union boss Steve Murphy said stronger local content provisions must be put in place if Australian manufacturers, workers or communities are to see any economic benefit from the project.

The federal government's lack of a credible industry policy would result in inferior wind towers being dumped on Australian projects from overseas, he warned.

"Currently, no provisions exist in this project to ensure that Australian produced steel or Australian manufactured goods are included in any projects which proceed in the Bunbury offshore wind zone," he said.



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Town meetings will be held in Bunbury, Busselton, Harvey and Mandurah in March, with written submissions due with the federal government by May 3.

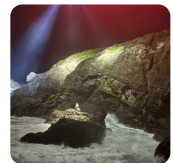
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