

MINUTES MARINUS LINK GIPPSLAND STAKEHOLDER LIAISON GROUP

Date: 25 February 2025

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams

Meeting #14

Chair: Marinus Link

Member Attendees

Elise Erwin (EE), RDV	Nick Dudley (ND), GLaWAC
Luke Arber (LA), DEWR	Ian Gibson (IG), Fed Uni
Shannon Egan (SE), TAFE Gippsland	Graham Ross (GR), SGLCN
Maddie Fraser (MFr) - South Gippsland SC	Ken Fraser (KF), South Gippsland SC
Tony Cantwell (TC), C4G	

Marinus Link Attendees

Clare Gleghorn (CG)	Mark Lindsay (ML)
Holly Williamson (HW)	Kate Guard (KG)
Brett McGennissen (BM),	Rochelle Reinhardt (RR)
Collette Burke (CB)	Megan Cartwright (MC)

Apologies

Martin Fuller (MFu) – WGCMA	Glen McColl (GMc), Latrobe CC
Owen Chapman (OC), RDV	Nick Stephens (NS) - SGLN
David Roberts (DR), Vic Skills Authority	Peter Mooney (PM), ETU

Minutes

Introduction (ML)

- Welcome and introduction to attendees.
- Apologies tabled.
- Thank you to those who attended our board route drive in November 2024, and our recent Meet the Proponent events in Leongatha and Morwell.

CEO Update (CB)

- Acknowledgement of Country.
- The project is progressing through the development and approval phases.
- Marinus Link has appointed a new CEO, Stephanie McGregor. Stephanie will start as CEO Delegate in late March and will step into the role of CEO in June, allowing her to familiarise herself with the project. Collette will remain as Interim CEO until June and step back onto the Marinus Link Board at this time.
- Overall, all the MLPL teams have been progressing well on their goals.
- MLPL has onboarded a local safety team as the project heads towards construction, with a focus on safety for all.
- Land access is progressing well, with positive progress with agreements with our important landholders.
- Community engagement continues to build project awareness and refine its approach to engaging with all stakeholders.
- The Final Investment Decision (FID) is expected in mid 2025.
- The Balance of Works (BOW) procurement process is underway, now in week six of a 20-week interactive program, and will conclude in June. We have shortlisted two consortiums, TasVic Greenlink and Empower.
- The Marinus Link Board and Executive team visited Gippsland last week, meeting stakeholders and conducting a cable route drive. It was an invaluable opportunity to understand the project's significance and the opportunity for leaving a positive legacy.

Project update (ML)

- Preparations for Stage 1 of Marinus Link are underway, with construction set to commence in 2026 subject to project approvals. Stage 1 is prioritised, with Stage 2 to follow.
- In May last year, MLPL signed an agreement with Hitachi for the converter station equipment. In August, a deal was secured with Prysmian for the supply and installation of HVDC cables.
- The Balance of Works (BOW) package is a key opportunity for locals to engage with Marinus Link, focusing on 90kms of underground construction in Gippsland and converter stations in Victoria and Tasmania.
- Last week we delivered three 'Meet the Proponents' linking small to medium enterprises with our two shortlisted tenderers. These events were held with ICN, and held in Burnie, Leongatha and Morwell and had over 600 attendees.

- The Marinus Link ICN Gateway is open until March 7. This is a chance for suppliers and contractors to build their profiles and strengthen their opportunity to gain work on the project. We expect to announce the successful Balance of Works contractor later this year.

Question: What is your perception of the future of the electricity market, particularly with the closure of coal mines? (IG)

Response: The closure of coal generation plants makes projects like Marinus Link increasingly vital. We need renewable energy sources like hydro to meet growing energy demands. Our project is crucial as we phase out fossil fuels, and the reliability of hydro plays a key role in maintaining base load power.

Question: Given that two of the three main stakeholders may change with upcoming elections, how have you ensured the project's security? (ND)

Response: There has been some discussion about the possibility of shareholder changes, but MLPL will await further communication and confirmation of these changes before discussing the impact to the project. Regardless of any changes, there is strong support for the project's outcome.

Question: Can you tell us more about both consortiums? (IG)

Response: For more information about this announcement, please see [Two consortiums shortlisted to progress through major civils tender: local businesses called to register Marinus Link](#).

Environmental Approvals Update (KG)

- MLPL is seeking the primary environment, heritage and planning approvals in three jurisdictions.
- The EIS/EES process for Victoria and the Commonwealth is combined.
- An additional two EISs were created for the Tasmanian processes, one for the Heybridge converter station, and one for the shore crossing of the cable. These were on display for public comment in Tasmania, through the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Burnie City Council.
- Following the public exhibition period, MLPL anticipate receiving requests for information from the EPA and Burnie City Council from mid-March and will respond accordingly.
- In Tasmania, the converter station will be located at the previous tioxide plant in Heybridge. HVDC cables will run from the converter station to the shore crossing , with two overhead lines coming in from the northwest towards the Tasmanian network.
- The converter station site will be 280m x 220m and will house the HV converter equipment. Temporary laydown and parking areas will be constructed. Construction of the converter station will begin in 2026 and will occur in two stages. The station will house a small operations and maintenance crew.
- MLPL prepared an Addendum addressing issues raised during the public exhibition and Vic planning panel processes to complete the Commonwealth assessment and approval process. This decision is anticipated in May 2025.
- The Victorian Planning Minister's assessment report is expected in March 2025. The IAC provided their report following the planning panel process *in* mid-December, which will inform decisions for approval. While the assessment is important, it is not an approval as such.
- MLPL is continuing to prepare the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for both RAP and non-RAP land. The non-RAP CHNP is being administered by First People State Relations, ensuring consultation with all Traditional Owner (TO) groups with an interest in the land.

Question: Is each converter station shed 280 x 280m? (ND)

Response: Each converter station will be 280m x 220m, similar in size to a double-story Bunnings warehouse.

Question: Where are the non-Recognised Aboriginal Party (RAP) areas? (IG)

Response: The non-RAP area runs from south of Mirboo North to the coastline, with GLaWAC's RAP covering our cable alignment from Mirboo North to Hazelwood. MLPL consulted early with First Peoples State Relations to gain advice on the Traditional Owners to engage with in shared Country – non RAP Country. From this, we have been working with GLaWAC, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, and Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council.

Question Any surprises from the Public Hearing process? (IG)

Response: No major surprises. Additional information was requested from some submitters, but MLPL addressed these concerns throughout this process. 27 submissions were received, which is considered a positive outcome for the project.

Landholder Update (BM)

- MLPL's project passes through 17kms of plantation land and the valuation process is currently underway for their land.
- The landfall site at Waratah Bay has been finalised with input from stakeholders including DEECA, SGSC, DTP and landholders.
- Due to recent changes to the cable route, the number of landholders involved has decreased to 99.
- Collaboration with DEECA and the Department of Natural Resources for crown land parcels is ongoing.
- MLPL continues to work closely with DEECA for crown land tenure and has gone through the native title process in both Victoria and Tasmania.
- Engagement with utility service providers, including APA for gas crossing, Gippsland Water and South Gippsland Water for water and sewage, and AusNet for electrical services is progressing.
- There has been a noticeable improvement in sentiment, and landholders are increasingly accepting that the project is proceeding.
- 54 of 99 easement and lease option deeds have been presented, with 21 executed, and MLPL hopes to finish this process by the end of March.

Question: Can MLPL continue working with SGSC engineers for coordination of works? (KF)

Response: Yes, MLPL can and will continue working collaboratively with SGSC engineers, and these discussions are appreciated.

Question: What is causing reluctance from some landholders to sign agreements? (GR)

Response: MLPL offers landholders the opportunity to seek their own legal advice and valuations, which can cause minor delays. This process ensures due diligence is done to confirm that the compensation and agreement terms are appropriate for them.

Question: What will the shore crossing look like, and what impact will it have during construction? (LA)

Response: The shore crossing will involve a temporary construction site just north of the dunes on Waratah Bay during the construction phase where the cables coming from the sea are joined to the land cable. Post construction, there will be no above ground infrastructure remaining other than a fenced telecommunications compound with ATCO hut like structures just south of the 90 degree bend on Waratah Road (approximately 4km from Sandy Point), This compound will be shielded by indigenous native vegetation to ensure it is not visible to passing traffic.

Engagement Update (HW)

- Meet the Proponent’s events – over 600 people attended across three days in Burnie, Leongatha and Morwell. Thank you to those who attended.
- Gippsland route drives have been conducted with the two shortlisted tenderers in recent weeks.
- Foster Show / Community Markets. Sentiment has changed and more people want to know when we will begin and how they can get involved.
- Sponsored Jack Jumpers NBL 2025 season, including the Bass Strait Battle between the Tasmania Jack Jumpers and Melbourne United.

Grants and Sponsorships (HW + ML)

- We have successfully opened the Marinus Link Community Grants and Sponsorship program, providing funding for local not-for-profit organisations in Gippsland and NW Tasmania.
- To date we have approved 10 applications.
- For information on these programs, including eligibility, go to [Grants, Partnerships and Sponsorships Marinus Link](#).

Question: What are the allocated funds for this? (GR)

Response: There has been \$110k allocated to supporting both the Marinus Link Community Grants and Sponsorship Program and the Marinus Link and Burnie City Council Community Partnership Program - [Community Partnership Program – Tasmania Marinus Link](#)

Meeting closed 10:30am

Actions	Who	Due Date
Distribute the minutes and presentation slides.	HW	
Send GSLG members a link to MLPL digital library, and grants and sponsorship program.	HW	
Share information on both consortiums with all GSLG members.	ML / HW	
Scheduled of MLPL route drive dates and 2025 engagements to be shared with all GSLG members	ML	
Next meeting – Tuesday 27 May	ALL	27/05/2025