



# Stephanie Thornton



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Auckland, New Zealand



[LinkedIn Profile](#)

## Profile

**Ocean Business Leader, specialising in ocean energy and sustainability** with extensive domestic and international experience advancing renewable ocean energy as a sustainable energy solution. Proven collaborator, skilled at fostering industry partnerships and driving sustainability initiatives in a start-up capacity. Passionate about harnessing the power of the ocean to create sustainable energy solutions that respond to climate change while achieving economic growth.

## Experience Summary

General Manager,  
**Azura Ocean Technology**

Co-founder & General Manager,  
**Australian Ocean Energy Group**

Program Manager,  
**Marine RE Operations Pty Ltd**

Founder & CEO  
**Clean Reach LLC**

Founder & General Manager  
**Ocean Energy Industry Australia**

Contractor & US Program Manager  
**Wave Energy AS**

Executive Director  
**Oregon Wave Energy Trust**

Program Manager  
**Portland General Electric**

Contractor  
**Australian Photovoltaic Institute**

Group Manager & Executive  
Leadership Team member,  
**URS Corporation, WEBG**

Chief  
**US National Marine Sanctuary  
Program, NOAA**

## Highlights of Achievements

- Principal Investigator for an Australian government-funded research initiative to develop and demonstrate a cutting-edge microgrid energy system integrating wave energy into land-based microgrids for aquaculture. The project successfully showcased the superior reliability, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of hybrid microgrid systems—combining wave energy, solar, wind, and battery storage—over traditional solar-battery configurations
- Founded and led a 32-member industry cluster with national and international representatives, fostering collaborations across businesses, industries, and clusters to advance the development of Australia's ocean energy sector.
- Pioneered global innovation in ocean energy market development by shifting the industry paradigm from a "technology push" to a "market pull" approach, emphasizing the creation of demand-driven strategies for ocean energy systems.
- Provided global thought leadership in ocean energy market development by positioning renewable ocean energy as a vital component of integrated renewable energy systems, complementing offshore wind. Advocated within geopolitical frameworks, including the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science.
- Maintained deep expertise in policies supporting technical innovation, investment, and market adoption of ocean energy. This encompassed regulatory planning and coordination, Marine Spatial Planning (resolving multi-user conflicts), development of Management Plans for Marine Protected Areas and fostering positive engagement with stakeholders.

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## Azura Ocean Technology

### General Manager

Nov 2024 - present  
Auckland, New Zealand

Azura Ocean Technology is a wave energy technology development company headquartered in New Zealand and with company operations in Australia.

Providing at-sea desalination systems and ocean energy microgrid expertise for emerging projects in New Zealand, Australia and other countries.

## Australian Ocean Energy Group

(a Program of Climate-KIC Australia)

### Co-Founder & General Manager

Jul 2018 - Nov 2024  
Sydney, Australia

Founded and led this industry-led cluster in Australia, where **no similar organization or program in renewable ocean energy previously existed in Australia**. The Cluster aim was to establish innovation in renewable offshore energy, with specific focus on the wave and tidal sectors, to provide a viable new low emissions option to support Australia's energy transition.

- **Principal Investigator**, Australia's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), design of an ocean energy microgrid project for an Australian aquaculture company in Victoria, Australia.
- Represented Australia's inaugural participation in the 28-country **International Energy Agency/Ocean Energy Systems (IEA-OES)** as Alternate Delegate.
- Led successful establishment of Australia's representation to the **International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) technical committee for ocean energy (TC114)**. This was the first time in its history that Australia has been represented on this International Commission.

## Marine RE Operations Pty Ltd

(formerly MAKO Tidal Turbines)

### Program Director

Oct 2015 - May 2018  
Sydney, Australia

Marine RE Operations (formerly MAKO Tidal Turbines) is an international tidal technology development company, innovating and commercialising a new technology to generate electricity from ocean tidal flows.

Responsible for a range of duties to ensure tidal turbine projects were successfully planned and delivered. Developed tactical and strategic development plans to coordinate tidal technology delivery with the end-user.

- Produced a complete project lifecycle for the engineering and manufacturing of the tidal turbines. Collaborated with a variety of disciplines due to multi-disciplinary approach to projects.
- Established stakeholder support in locations for demonstration projects, including Singapore and the European Marine Energy Centre (Orkney, Scotland).
- Secured regulatory permits for demonstration projects.

## Clean Reach LLC

### Founder & CEO

Nov 2013 - May 2015  
Portland, Oregon, USA

Established an independent client consultancy supporting businesses to develop a crowdfunding platform to advance the renewable energy industry.

- Designed and started-up a crowdfunding platform to raise funds and build a global community to accelerate growth of the renewable energy industry.
- Provided strategic guidance to renewable energy businesses, enabling them to leverage crowdfunding as a viable financing model for innovative projects.

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## Ocean Energy Industry Australia (OEIA)

### Founder & General Manager

Jun 2011 – Nov 2012

Sydney, Australia

Facilitated a cross-industry group of Australian ocean energy professionals to create OEIA. Worked across diverse stakeholder groups to build support and awareness for the Australian ocean energy sector.

- Established OEIA in collaboration with a 6-member Board of Directors.
- Spokesperson for Australian ocean energy developers with government, stakeholders and the general public.

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## Australian Photovoltaic Institute

### Contractor

Jun 2012 – Nov 2012

Sydney, Australia

APVI is a non-profit representing the Australian photovoltaic industry.

- Completed organisational development and expansion plan to increase revenues, reach new customers and promote products and services.
- Conducted market research and stakeholder analysis to identify growth opportunities and strengthen industry partnerships.

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## Waveenergy AS

### US Program Manager

Nov 2009 – Jan 2011

Stavanger, Norway & Portland, Oregon, USA

A Norwegian wave energy technology development company.

- Completed site selection process, stakeholder engagement activities and analysis for an ocean energy project in Tillamook, Oregon.
- Conducted strategic and project planning activities at company headquarters in Norway.

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## Oregon Wave Energy Trust

### Executive Director

May 2008 – Jun 2009

Portland, Oregon, USA

Served as first Executive Director of the new state-funded, not-for-profit promoting development of renewable wave energy in Oregon, USA. OWET was a starting point for the global U.S. ocean energy industry.

- Designed and launched a marine energy industry development program consisting of 22 initiatives within the categories of education, environment, regulations, applied research, market development and policy support.
- Secured resources to support development of innovative wave energy projects, fostering collaboration between industry, academia, and government stakeholders.

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## Portland General Electric (A regional utility company)

### Program Manager, Project Management Office

Feb 2004 – Mar 2008

Portland, Oregon, USA

Project Management Professional (PMI Certified) for PGE's Project Management Office.

- Completed the Customer Care Centre change management initiative 37% under budget and the remaining phases completed according to planned scope, schedule and budget. Received a PGE Notable Achievement Award.
- Led the planning for a 3-year, \$7 million effort to overhaul PGE's web infrastructure. Oversaw four project teams, external contractors, and advised four executive Vice-Presidents. Received a PGE Notable Achievement Award.
- Chaired the PGE Project Management Alliance, a cross-organisational/enterprise-wide group of PGE project and program managers. Provided leadership in providing education, training and resources to support the project manager success and growth within the company.

## URS Corporation

### Group Manager & Executive Leadership Team member

Water and Environment Business Group (WEBG)

Jan 2003 – Feb 2004

Portland, Oregon, USA

Served as a member of a four-person, office-wide executive leadership team responsible for project-managing client initiatives, strategic planning, marketing strategy, financial management, human resources, and corporate policy alignment with global headquarters.

- Led the design of an improved project management system to manage delivery and control of client initiatives and successfully managed the corresponding change process to implement the new system.
- Spearheaded cross-functional collaboration to enhance operational efficiency, driving alignment between business development, technical teams, and client expectations to achieve strategic goals.

## US National Marine Sanctuary Program (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - NOAA)

### Chief

May 1996 – Nov 2000

Washington D.C. USA

The Marine Sanctuary Program was designed to protect and administer 13 congressionally mandated marine protected areas in the United States and establish new marine protected areas as appropriate. The national network of sanctuary's encompasses more than 600,000 square miles of U.S. ocean and Great Lakes waters.

- Chaired a tri-national Marine Protected Area Conservation Strategy & Action Plan team with representatives from Mexico and Canada, through NAFTA's Council on Environmental Cooperation.
- Oversaw instalment of the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary.
- Directed wide-ranging stakeholder engagement strategies to reduce conflicts in government-protected ocean zones

**Executive Master of Business Administration** – Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California

**Bachelor of Science in Marine Science**- Humboldt State University, Eureka, California

**Certified Project Management Professional (PMP)** – the International Project Management Institute (PMI) - 12 years

**Certificate of Public Administration**, Federal Executive Institute, Washington DC



PGE Notable Achievement Awards - May 2005 & September 2007

Special Award, international Project Management Institute (PMI) Global Operations Centre for successfully leading creation of the Portland Chapter's Project Excellence Award Initiative - PMI Leadership Conference – 2006

