

**Tuesday, May 9, 2006**

## **BASSLINK OFFICIALLY OPENED**

The world's longest interconnector, Basslink, was this morning officially opened in a ceremony that spanned Bass Strait.

The 360 kilometre electricity link between Victoria and Tasmania was simultaneously launched by Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, and Tasmanian Premier, Paul Lennon, through a video link up using the fibre optic section of the cable itself.

National Grid Australia Managing Director, Bill Russell, said the historic interconnector would now play a vital part in securing mainland Australia's energy needs.

"Back in 1999 when we submitted our tender to build Basslink, National Grid recognised the importance of the project to Tasmania and mainland Australia.

I am delighted to say Basslink is now here, online and live," Mr Russell said.

National Grid is one of the worlds largest utilities with more than 15,000 kilometres of electricity and gas transmission and over 261, 000 kilometres of electricity and gas distribution in the UK and US.

"This has been a large project for our company.

"Basslink has been an exciting and challenging project and one in which National Grid is very proud to be part of," Mr Russell said.

"Delivering to demanding timeline, this has been no mean feat. The project took over 1.25 million man hours to complete. We had 5 lost time injuries over the construction period of three and a half years, none of them serious and no injuries in Victoria.

"We are here through the hard work of the National Grid team, our contractors Siemens and Prysmian, and many local construction companies, industry groups and environmental groups. I wish to pay tribute to those people who delivered this massive infrastructure project in a safe and reliable manner," Mr Russell said.

"I would also like to thank our customer Hydro Tasmania. We have worked very well together to date and it certainly sets a positive precedent for the operation of Basslink."

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**



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Mr Russell said National Grid was committed to providing power to mainland Australia and Tasmania responsibly and efficiently.

“We will continue to dedicate ourselves to operating and maintaining Basslink to high safety, health and environmental standards.”

National Grid won the tender to build Basslink in February 2000. A two and a half year independent environmental assessment followed with the Federal, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments approving Basslink in November 2002. Following a massive construction campaign Basslink became operational midnight on April 28.

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**National Grid Australia Pty Ltd**

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