



Media Statement Clarifying Events of Jan 09

During the period 28-30 January 2009, record high temperatures were recorded in Victoria and Tasmania, resulting in high electricity demands in Victoria and South Australia on the 29th and 30th January 2009.

As a result of the heat, there were reductions in the availability of a number of Victorian generators which led to market regulator NEMMCO to declare actual lack of reserves and instruct “load shedding” in Victoria and South Australia.

The extremity of the heat during this period has been described by NEMMCO as being a one in a one hundred year event with a number of records broken:

- 28-30 January 2009 was the first time in recorded history that Melbourne experienced three consecutive days above 42 degrees Celsius.
- Northern Tasmania recorded its highest temperatures ever, with Launceston Airport reaching 40.4 degrees Celsius, breaking the previous record by more than 3 degrees.

On the 29th and 30th of January, Basslink’s protective systems limited, and at times completely constrained energy flows, as ambient temperatures rose above the limits of its design specifications.

During this period, the Basslink interconnector operated as per its design.

The Basslink Interconnector is a state of the art facility. It was designed to operate normally in temperatures of up to 43 degrees in Victoria (with a protective block at 45 degrees) and up to 33 degrees in Tasmania (with a protective block at 35). As temperature moved beyond the normal design limitations (43 and 33 degrees respectively), the interconnector automatically commences a progressive, scaled reduction in energy flows. At the point where temperatures reach the protective block threshold, the energy flow is completely stopped. This protective block function is fundamental to ensuring the longevity of the asset.

Basslink is a fully automated interconnector, which means that the facility requires no human intervention to operate. The automated functionality of the interconnector extends to its protective block function – when temperatures exceed those at which it was designed to operate, the protective block automatically limits/constrains flows.

A number of government and non-government entities were involved in Basslink’s design specifications as part of the planning approval process prior to commissioning in 2006.



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Although Basslink is designed to operate as an unmanned automated facility, during the period 28-31 January, both Basslink converter stations were fully manned in preparation for the predicted high temperatures.

As a NEM participant, Basslink is obliged to inform NEMMCO of any change in capacity. Throughout the extreme heat period, Basslink operated in accordance with the National Electricity Rules (NER) by revising and accurately reporting forecast capability to the regulator.

A similar event occurred on 10th December 2006 in which Basslink's flows were limited as a result of extreme ambient temperature. This was also fully documented by NEMMCO, including notation of all temperature limits.

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For further media information, please contact Matthew Mahon, Royce (03) 9639 2300
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