

Power lifeline hailed

THE Basslink cable from Victoria to Tasmania has averted the need for power rationing in Tasmania heading into winter.

Hydro Tasmania said the Basslink cable had proven to be a lifeline for energy to the state.

The Bell Bay gas-fired power station in Tasmania's north has stopped supplementing existing supplies for at least the next few days while a supplier carries out urgent maintenance work in Victoria.

Low rainfall has compounded the problem and potentially threatens the amount of hydro produced electricity.

Water flows from key lakes which drive power producing turbines have dropped to alarmingly low levels.

Hydro Tasmania said water storages were down to just 20.9 per cent of capacity, 10.4 per cent below last year's level.

Dr Michael Connarty, for Hydro Tasmania, said water flows over the past 12 months into the Great Lake, in central Tasmania, had been the lowest on record.

He said the amount of electricity imported from Victoria so far was enough to power Launceston for a year.