



Media Statement

27 January 2016

Basslink interconnector update

- Initial cable inspection did not reveal any obvious seabed disruption;
- Cable vessel sailing to Bass Strait after program of significant works in Geelong;
- Second phase of vessel activity expected to de-bury cable and determine exact fault location

Basslink CEO Malcolm Eccles today advised that its cable rectification program was proceeding on schedule as expected and had entered its next phase, with specialist cable vessel the *Ile de Re* now at sea again.

“Over the past week, the team working on the repair of the Basslink interconnector have made good progress as we seek to repair the interconnector and return it to operation.

“As advised, an initial inspection of the seabed was undertaken over a week ago, using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV). This initial inspection did not reveal the precise fault location, hence at this point in time, we still do not have any additional information on the cause(s) of the fault,” said Mr Eccles.

Since the ship returned from the initial inspection, Basslink has had over 100 people on site at the Port of Geelong working as a 24-hour operation assisting with the vessel modifications, and preparing for the next phases of the project.

While in Geelong, the following works have been undertaken:

- Major areas of the ship’s deck cleared of existing telecommunications cable equipment, to make way for bulkier, heavier electrical cables and equipment;
- Installation of two major chutes to the rear of the vessel, allowing for safe and efficient cable retrieval and cable laying;
- Strengthening of the ship’s deck, in preparation for installation of the 80 tonne cable reel that will be required during the campaign;
- Arrival and installation of a second remote operated submarine vehicle (ROV) from Denmark, which will assist the campaign.

The vessel is now back at the location of the suspected fault area in Bass Strait. It is expected it will spend the next week undertaking a fault location and deburial of the cable, before returning to Geelong.



This current phase is the second in an anticipated 4-phased sailing campaign for the vessel:

| Phase | Vessel activity | Estimated Timing |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 | Survey of cable fault location | Completed, 19 Jan |
| 2 | Fault location and cable deburial | Currently underway – may take 4-5 days |
| 3 | Cable cut and capping, analysis of fault at ground level | February |
| 4 | Cable jointing and repair work | Early March |

The vessel will return to Geelong once the cable has been de-buried. This is expected to take around a week, pending a range of variables. Upon return, further equipment will be installed and cable cutting specialists will board the vessel ahead of the next marine phase.

Based on current information, the repair of the interconnector will require the complete cable bundle to be cut, which will take the fibre optic telecommunications cable out of service until repairs have been completed. Basslink Telecoms customers have been advised of this interruption to service. Basslink understands that its telecoms customers have contingencies in place, or are in the process of finalising these contingencies.

Basslink's anticipated return to service date remains unchanged at 19 March 2016. Contingencies have been built into this timeframe, and there is a possibility that the interconnector may be operational ahead of the indicative date.

Mr Eccles said, "Despite confidence in our ability to meet the dates, there remain a number of aspects beyond Basslink's control. Together with our partners, we are trying our best in a tough environment to restore operations as soon as possible.

"Basslink will continue to update and advise its key stakeholders on the developments, as well as the likely return to service date."

Key facts:

- Cable vessel *Ile De Re* is 143m in length and will have a capacity workforce of 60 people during the campaign
- Total people involved in project exceeds 100
- Cable partner Prysmian will assign 13 cable joiners from Italy to the project, complementing local experts
- Basslink is the second-longest subsea HVDC cable in the world
- Two remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) will aid fault location, deburial, cut and recovery of the cable at a depth of around 80m



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For further media enquiries on Basslink, please contact:

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About Basslink www.basslink.com.au

The Basslink Interconnector enhances security of supply on both sides of Bass Strait; protecting Tasmania against the risk of drought-constrained energy shortages while providing Victoria and southern states with secure renewable energy during times of peak demand. The Basslink Interconnector is the world's second longest undersea electricity cable. Owned by Keppel Infrastructure Trust, Basslink delivers excellence in the areas of safety, reliability and performance.

Basslink has a number of fibre optic assets which carry high speed telecommunication traffic. Basslink Telecoms offers a range of wholesale transmission services between Tasmania and Victoria.