



Media Statement

29 March 2016

Basslink interconnector fault pinpointed

Basslink has successfully pinpointed the fault location on the interconnector and removed it from the cable on Easter Sunday.

The fault point was identified at 90.467km from the Tasmanian coastline. The cause of the fault is yet to be determined, subject to forensic testing.

“The analysis process, which saw us cut the cable 1150m from the fault, has been encouraging,” said Basslink CEO Malcolm Eccles. “This represents a difference of only 0.4% of Basslink’s entire cable length, which is a great result and vindicates the extent of testing and analysis undertaken.

“The team has worked hard over the last few days clearing around 63 tonnes of cable to ensure it does not interfere with the later phases of repair operations. We have also conducted extensive tests to confirm the removal of the fault and that the cable is ready for jointing, with both ends of the cable now capped and on the sea bed,” said Eccles.

The initial findings have revealed the degree of water ingress into the cable through the fault has resulted in more damaged cable that needs to be replaced, which will see a third joint required on the cable. In simple terms, water got in and damaged the cable – this now needs to be removed. Consequently, an additional mobilisation phase is required in Geelong to restock the vessel with cable to complete the jointing phase to connect the additional replacement cable.

While every effort is being made to return the interconnector to service as soon as possible, Basslink has advised key stakeholders to prepare for a mid-June return to service date, to take into account likely contingencies such as poor weather. The jointing works are highly susceptible to weather conditions as each joint will require a continuous clear weather period to allow it to be safely completed.

The cable repair vessel the *Ile de Ré* is about to return to Geelong, where it will spend the next 10 days mobilising for the next phase which involves joining the two new pieces of cable to the interconnector to replace the removed section.

During this time, Basslink will reconfigure the vessel’s layout, load around 100 tonnes of spare cable and change a number of key personnel, which includes additional cable jointing expertise to the repair team.



In the meantime, Basslink will continue to update its key stakeholders, Hydro Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, of the repair activities on a regular basis. A Hydro Tasmania observer appointed by the State continues to be present on the *Ile de Ré* at all times when at sea.

- Ends -

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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.