



Media Statement

8 March 2016

Basslink interconnector repair progresses

Basslink has today announced that it has refined the probable fault location and would proceed to the next phase which involves cutting the cables.

To identify fault location, Basslink's sea and land repair teams have engaged leading experts on more than 3 specialised fault location techniques, conducted more than 20 ROV (remote operated vehicle) dives, and collected more than 500 hours of visual imagery and data. In total, the repair teams have dedicated more than 30 days of round-the-clock fault location identification work due to the unexpected complexity of the fault.

"While there remains some more days of work and analysis to be done before we can provide a more accurate estimate of return to service, it is an important milestone," said Mr Malcolm Eccles, CEO of Basslink.

He added, "We empathise with the community over the time that it has taken. However, the decision to cut the cables must be made with great care and consideration due to its complexities and challenges. The consequences of a hasty and ill-considered decision will be far-reaching. We have reached this milestone only after detailed analysis of the test results and close consultation with leading experts from around the world."

Mr Eccles also said that the exact cause of the fault would not be known for some time and will require a detailed analysis of the damaged cable point before any conclusions would be reached.

Due to the complex nature of the fault, including the lack of visible damage, the team may need to undertake additional cutting to narrow the location of fault. The likelihood of this additional step will only be known once further testing and analysis are carried out.

The probable fault location has been narrowed down to approximately 98 km from the Tasmanian coast. Subject to weather conditions, it is anticipated that the cables will be cut within the next week. Following the initial cut and pending additional cuts, the cable ends will be recovered, in turn, on to the vessel, tested and capped to prevent moisture ingress. The entire process of "cut and cap" is estimated to take around two weeks, again, subject to weather and the cable tests.

Following the "cut and cap" process, it is expected the *Ile De Re* will return to Geelong, to load specialised jointing equipment, personnel and spare cables before returning to the cut location to insert new cables of the required lengths at the point of the cut.



Based on best estimates, and allowing some contingency for weather and other unforeseeable conditions, it is expected that the interconnector will be operational again in late May. Naturally, every effort will be made to ensure the return to service date is as soon as possible.

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 Re* 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.