

Electricity Report 1 – 7 February 2015



Introduction

The AER is required to publish the reasons for significant variations between forecast and actual price and is responsible for monitoring activity and behaviour in the National Electricity Market. The Electricity Report forms an important part of this work. The report contains information on significant price variations, movements in the contract market, together with analysis of spot market outcomes and rebidding behaviour. By monitoring activity in these markets, the AER is able to keep up to date with market conditions and identify compliance issues.

Spot market prices

Figure 1 shows the spot prices that occurred in each region during the week.

Figure 1 : Spot price by region (\$/MWh)

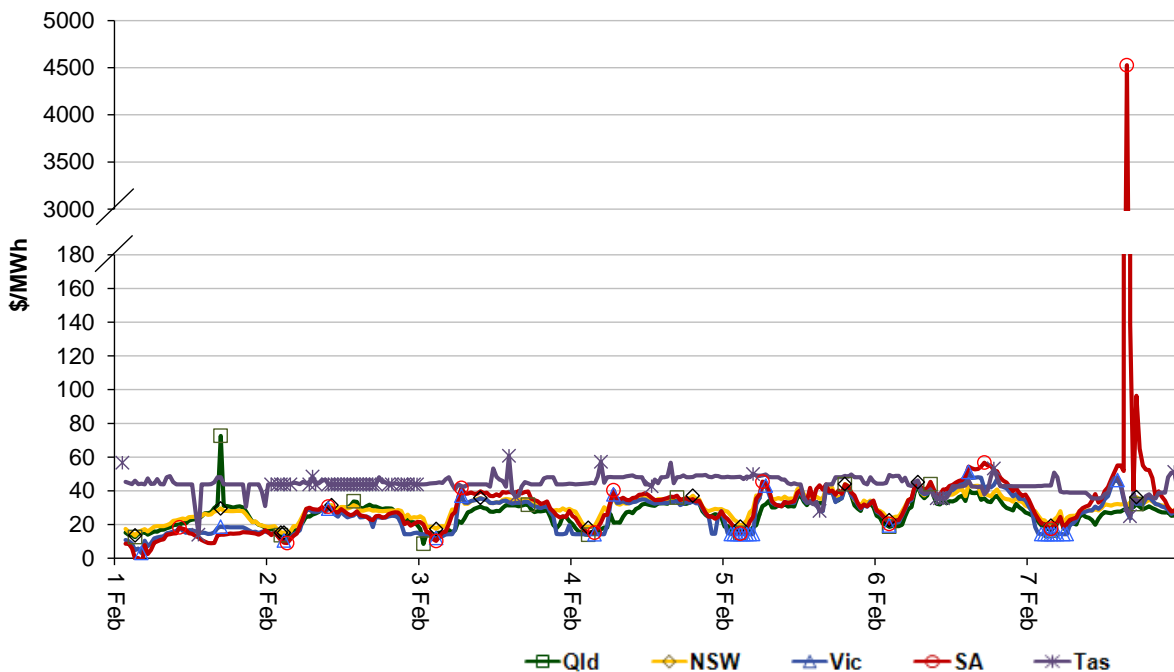


Figure 2 shows the volume weighted average (VWA) prices for the current week (with prices shown in Table 1) and the preceding 12 weeks, as well as the VWA price over the previous 3 financial years.

Figure 2 : Volume weighted average spot price by region (\$/MWh)

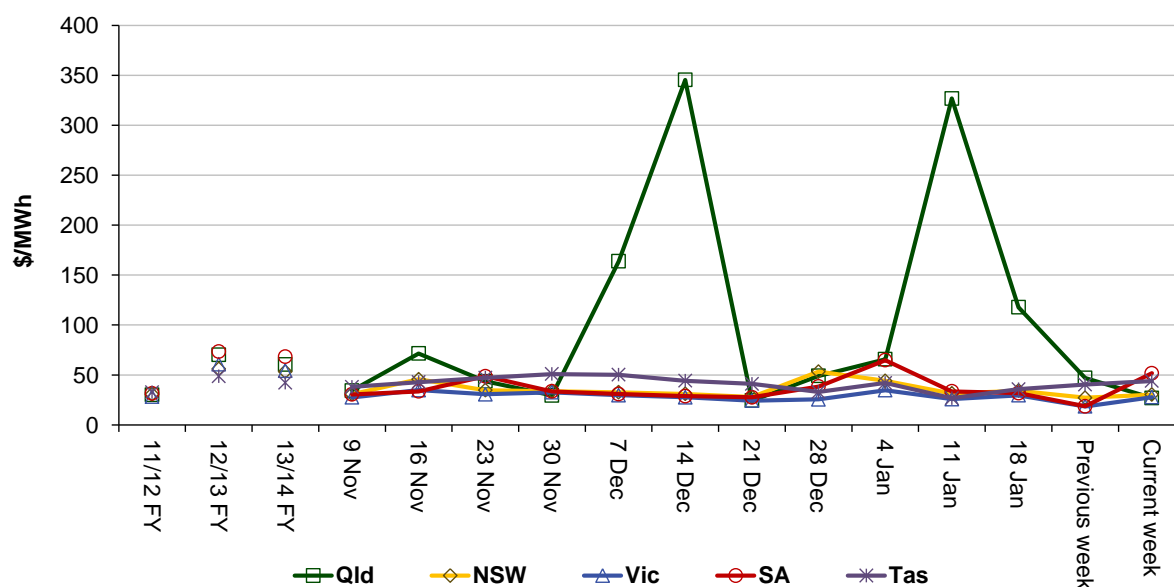


Table 1 : Volume weighted average spot prices by region (\$/MWh)

Region	Qld	NSW	Vic	SA	Tas
Current week	27	30	28	52	44
13-14 financial YTD	61	53	54	68	42
14-15 financial YTD	62	37	32	40	38

Longer-term statistics tracking average spot market prices are available on the [AER website](#).

Spot market price forecast variations

The AER is required under the National Electricity Rules to determine whether there is a significant variation between the forecast spot price published by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and the actual spot price and, if there is a variation, state why the AER considers the significant price variation occurred. It is not unusual for there to be significant variations as demand forecasts vary and participants react to changing market conditions. A key focus is whether the actual price differs significantly from the forecast price either four or 12 hours ahead. These timeframes have been chosen as indicative of the time frames within which different technology types may be able to commit (intermediate plant within four hours and slow start plant within 12 hours).

There were 47 trading intervals throughout the week where actual prices varied significantly from forecasts. This compares to the weekly average in 2014 of 71 counts and the average in 2013 of 97. Reasons for the variations for this week are summarised in Table 2. Based on AER analysis, the table summarises (as a percentage) the number of times when the actual price differs significantly from the forecast price four or 12 hours ahead and the major reason for that variation. The reasons are classified as availability (which means that there is a change in the total quantity or price offered for generation), demand forecast inaccuracy, changes to network capability or as a combination of factors (when there is not one dominant reason). An instance where both four and 12 hour ahead forecasts differ significantly from the actual price will be counted as two variations.

Table 2 : Reasons for variations between forecast and actual prices

	Availability	Demand	Network	Combination
% of total above forecast	3	32	5	0
% of total below forecast	42	16	0	3

Note: Due to rounding, the total may not be 100 per cent.

Generation and bidding patterns

The AER reviews generator bidding as part of its market monitoring to better understand the drivers behind price variations. Figure 3 to Figure 7 show the total generation dispatched and the amounts of capacity offered within certain price bands for each 30 minute trading interval in each region.

Figure 3 : Queensland generation and bidding patterns

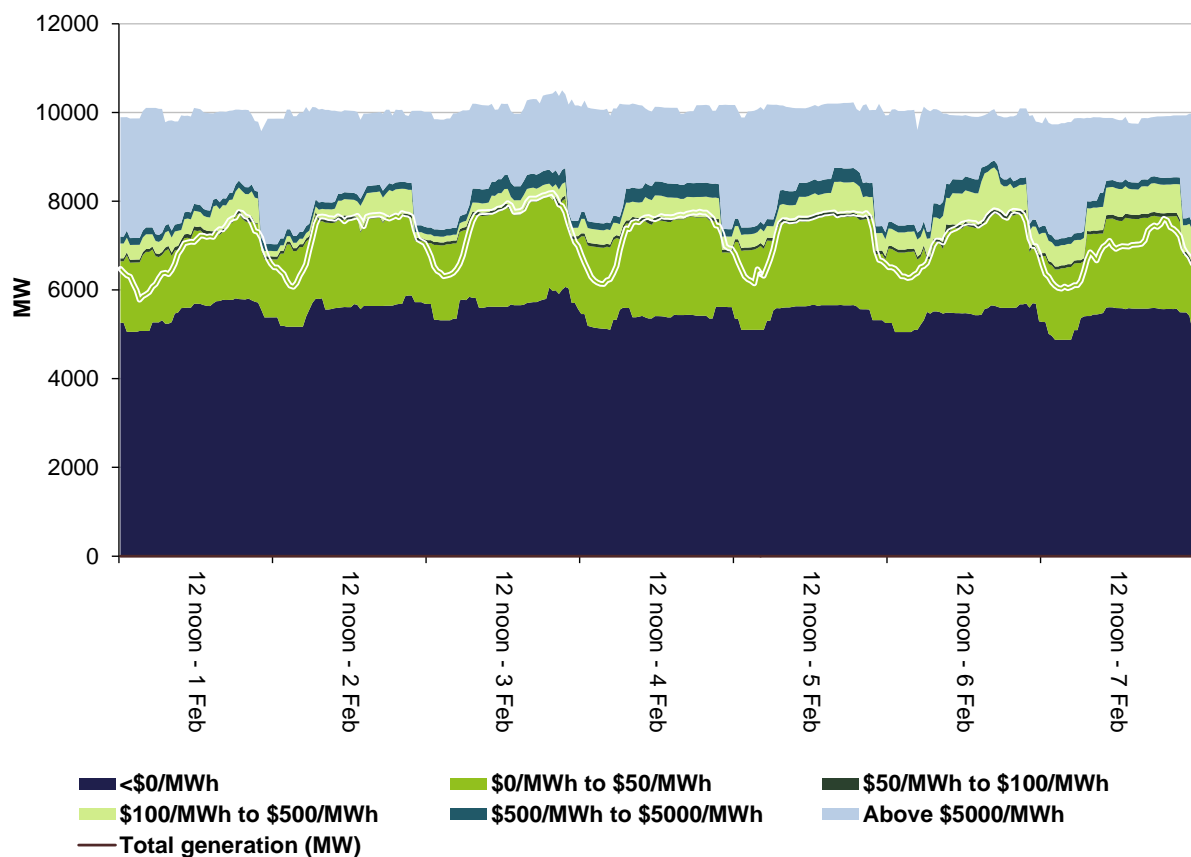


Figure 4 : New South Wales generation and bidding patterns

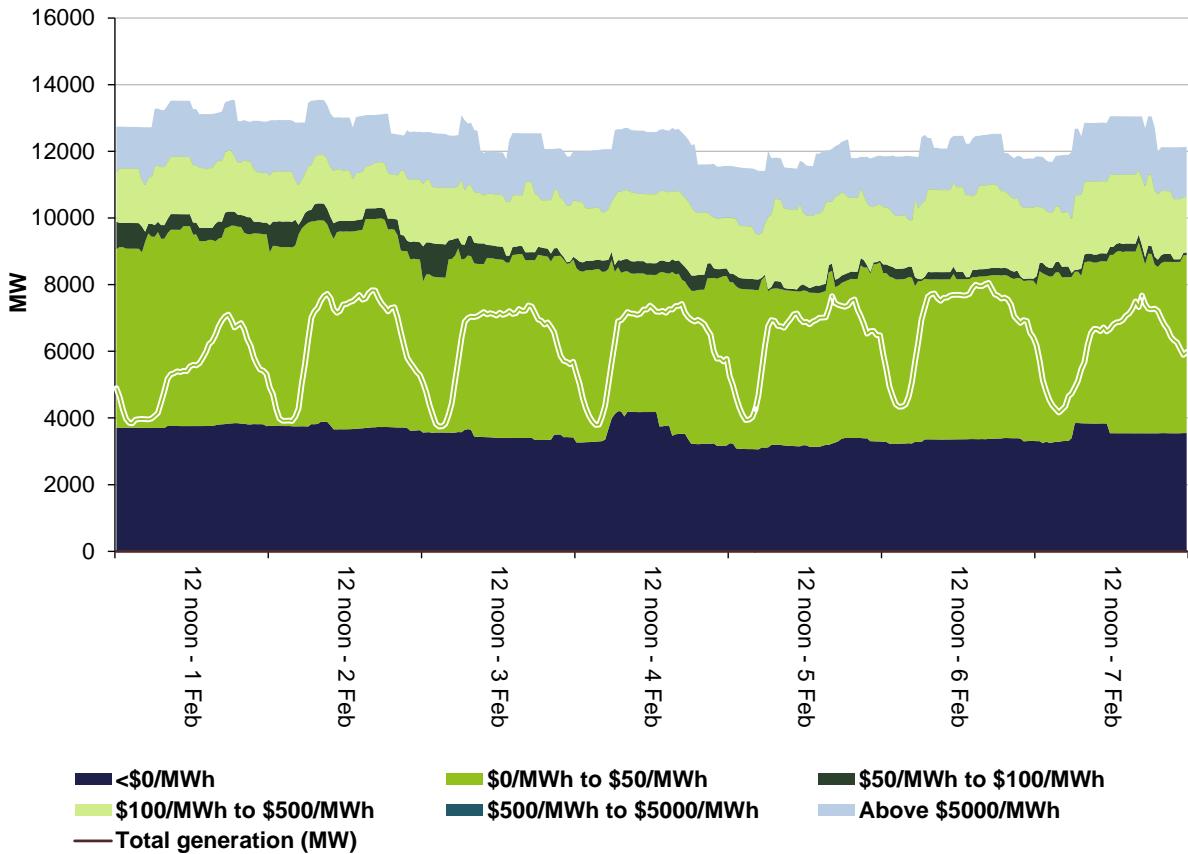


Figure 5 : Victoria generation and bidding patterns

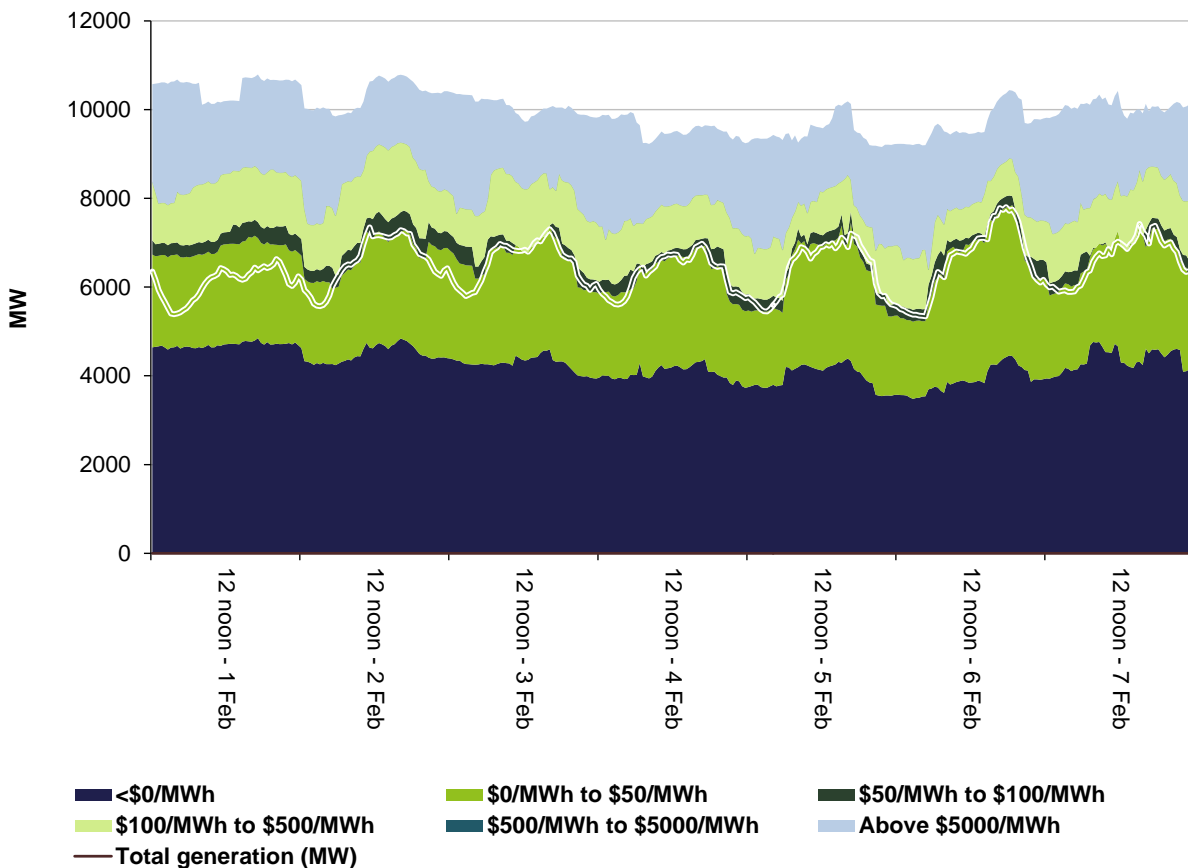


Figure 6: South Australia generation and bidding patterns

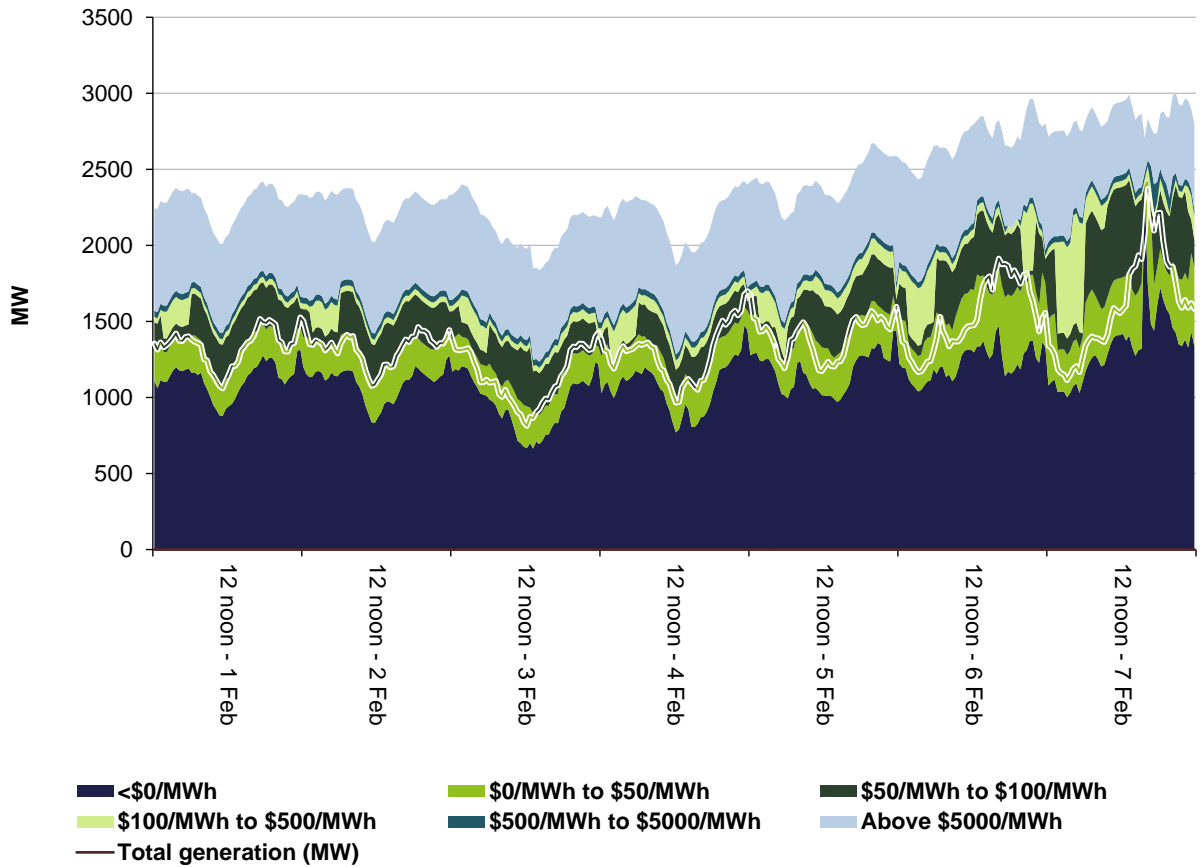
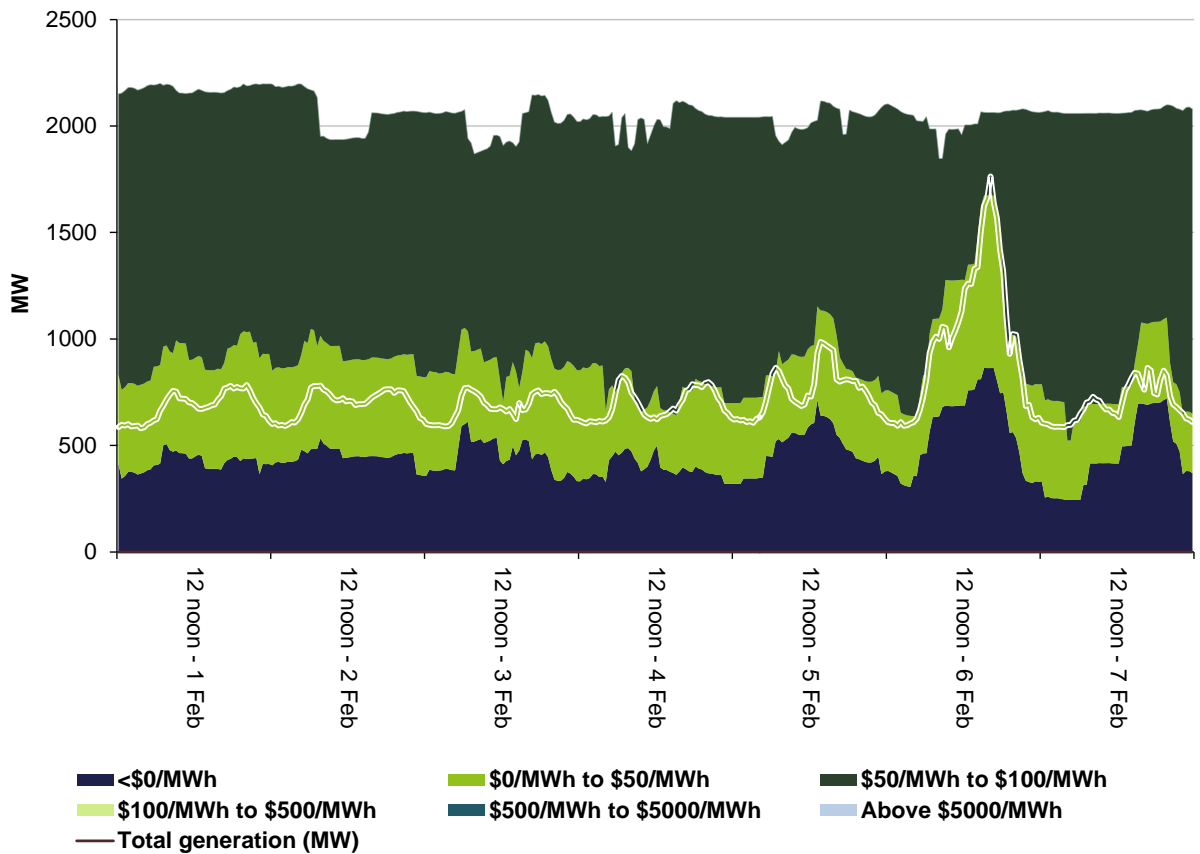


Figure 7: Tasmania generation and bidding patterns



Frequency control ancillary services markets

Frequency control ancillary services (FCAS) are required to maintain the frequency of the power system within the frequency operating standards. Raise and lower regulation services are used to address small fluctuations in frequency, while raise and lower contingency services are used to address larger frequency deviations. There are six contingency services:

- fast services, which arrest a frequency deviation within the first 6 seconds of a contingent event (raise and lower 6 second)
- slow services, which stabilise frequency deviations within 60 seconds of the event (raise and lower 60 second)
- delayed services, which return the frequency to the normal operating band within 5 minutes (raise and lower 5 minute) at which time the five minute dispatch process will take effect.

The Electricity Rules stipulate that generators pay for raise contingency services and customers pay for lower contingency services. Regulation services are paid for on a “causer pays” basis determined every four weeks by AEMO.

The total cost of FCAS on the mainland for the week was \$1 327 000 or around 1.3 per cent of energy turnover on the mainland. The total cost of FCAS in Tasmania for the week was \$75 000 or less than 1 per cent of energy turnover in Tasmania.

Figure 8 : Daily frequency control ancillary service cost

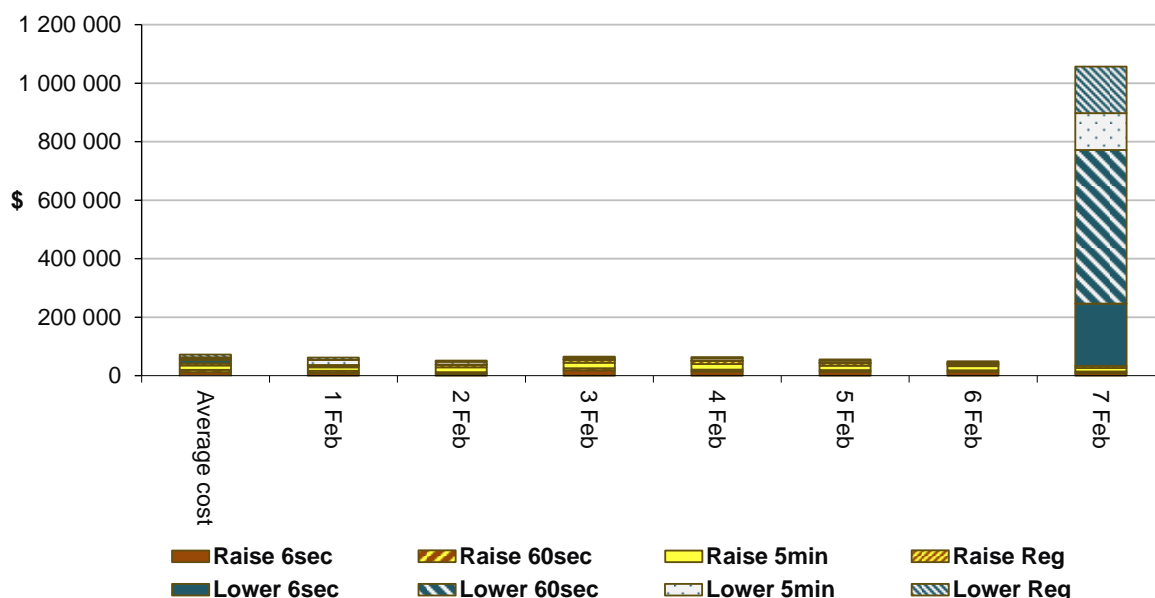


Figure 8 shows the daily breakdown of cost for each FCAS for the NEM, as well as the average cost since the beginning of the previous financial year. On 7 February, the requirement for lower regulation services increased significantly in South Australia following the unplanned outage of the Alcoa Portland–Heywood–Tarrone no.1 500 kV transmission line and the Alcoa Portland no.3 500 kV bus. The price for lower 5 minute services reached \$9000/MW at 3.40 pm and 3.45 pm. The price for lower 60 second services reached \$13 100/MW at 3.40 pm, 3.45 pm, and 3.50 pm. The price for the lower 6 second services

reached \$13 100/MW at 3.40 pm and 3.45 pm. Overall the cost of lower FCAS in South Australia exceeded \$1 000 000. This is described further in the 'Detailed market analysis of significant price events' section.

Detailed market analysis of significant price events

We provide more detailed analysis of events where the spot price was greater than three times the weekly average price in a region and above \$250/MWh or was below -\$100/MWh.

South Australia

There was one occasion where the spot price in South Australia was greater than three times the South Australia weekly average price of \$52/MWh and above \$250/MWh.

South Australia - Saturday, 7 February

Table 3 : Price, Demand and Availability

Time	Price (\$/MWh)			Demand (MW)			Availability (MW)		
	Actual	4 hr forecast	12 hr forecast	Actual	4 hr forecast	12 hr forecast	Actual	4 hr forecast	12 hr forecast
4 PM	4526.63	45.99	44.97	2125	2163	2122	2787	2935	3038

Demand was close to forecast. Available generation was 148 MW lower than forecast four hours before.

At 3.19 pm, the Alcoa Portland–Heywood–Tarrone no.1 500 kV transmission line and the Alcoa Portland no.3 500 kV bus tripped. AEMO invoked a number of constraints at 3.35 pm to manage the outages. The constraints affected the Heywood and Murraylink interconnectors and lower FCAS requirements in South Australia.

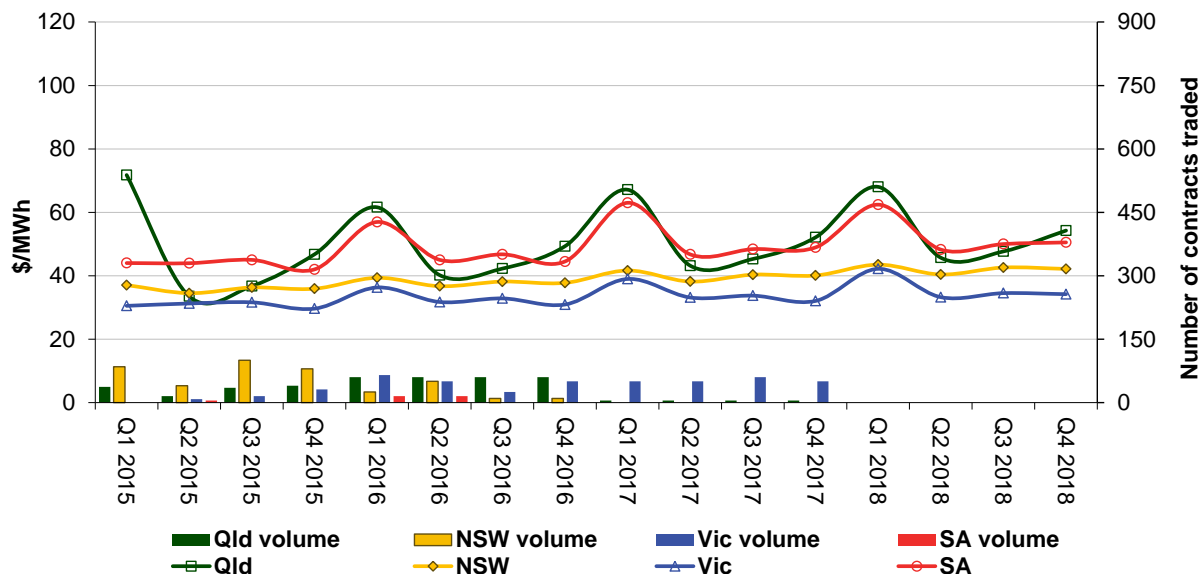
At 3.40 pm in response to the constraints, the Heywood interconnector switched from importing 275 MW into South Australia, to exporting 250 MW into Victoria (a 525 MW change). However, the step change across Heywood was not enough to meet the constraint requirements causing the constraints to violate at 3.40 pm and 3.45 pm. With low-priced capacity either ramp rate limited, fully dispatched or stranded in FCAS, the dispatch price reached the price cap at 3.40 pm and 3.45 pm. The above conditions led to an increase in the requirement for lower FCAS in South Australia. This resulted in high FCAS prices, as detailed in the 'Frequency control ancillary services markets' section.

There was no significant rebidding.

Financial markets

Figure 9 shows for all mainland regions the prices for base contracts (and total traded quantities for the week) for each quarter for the next four financial years.

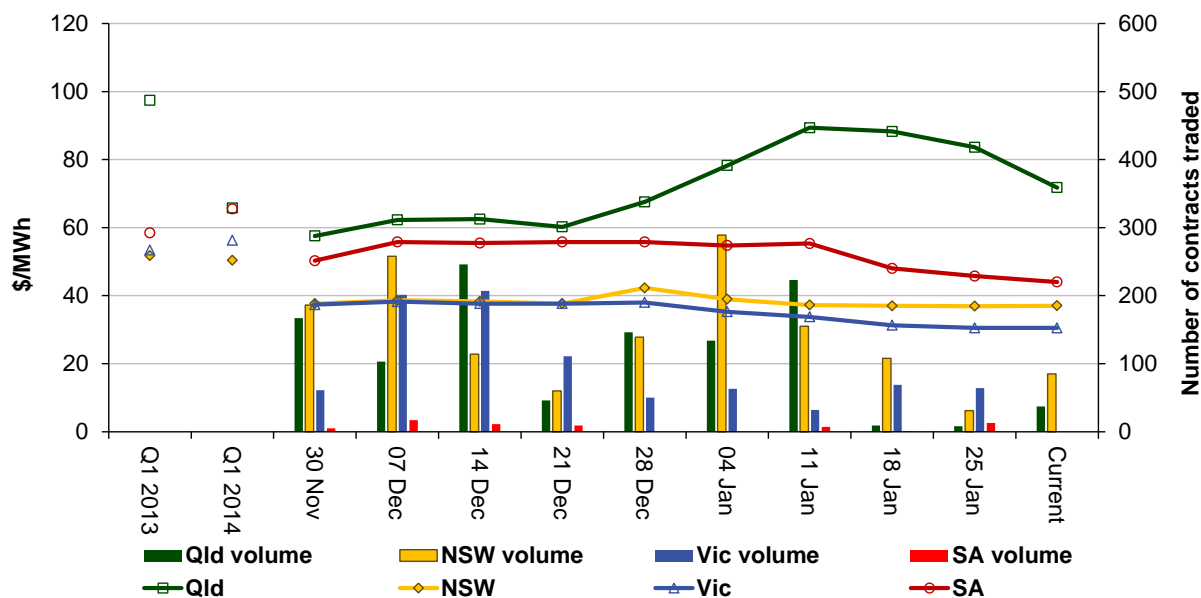
Figure 9 : Quarterly base future prices Q1 2015 – Q4 2018



Source: ASXEnergy.com.au

Figure 10 shows how the price for each regional Quarter 1 2015 base contract has changed over the last 10 weeks (as well as the total number of trades each week). The closing quarter 1 2013 and quarter 1 2014 prices are also shown. The AER notes that data for South Australia is less reliable due to very low numbers of trades.

Figure 10 : Price of Q1 2015 base contracts over the past 10 weeks (and the past 2 years)



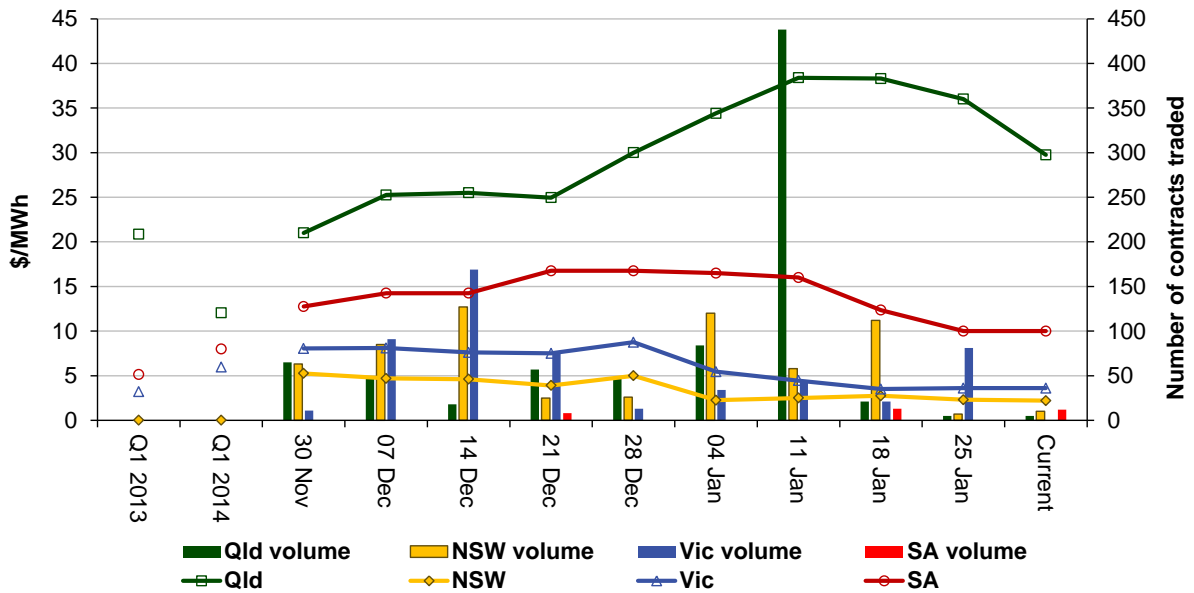
Note: Base contract prices are shown for each of the current week and the previous 9 weeks, with average prices shown for yearly periods 1 and 2 years prior to the current year

Source: ASXEnergy.com.au

Prices of other financial products (including longer-term price trends) are available in the [Industry Statistics](#) section of our website.

Figure 11: Price of Q1 2015 cap contracts over the past 10 weeks (and the past 2 years) shows how the price for each regional Quarter 1 2015 cap contract has changed over the last 10 weeks (as well as the total number of trades each week). The closing quarter 1 2013 and quarter 1 2014 prices are also shown.

Figure 11 : Price of Q1 2015 cap contracts over the past 10 weeks (and the past 2 years)



Source: ASXEnergy.com.au

Australian Energy Regulator

February 2015