

WEEKLY ELECTRICITY MARKET ANALYSIS



AUSTRALIAN ENERGY
REGULATOR

25 March - 31 March 2012

Summary

Weekly average spot prices ranged from \$24/MWh in Queensland to \$31/MWh in Tasmania. The higher average spot price in Tasmania was the result of consecutive trading intervals of around \$55/MWh during the minimum load period in the early hours of the morning.

Spot market prices

Figure 1 sets out the volume weighted average (VWA) prices for the week 25 March to 31 March and the 11/12 financial year to date (YTD) across the NEM. It compares these prices with price outcomes from the previous week and year to date respectively.

Figure 1: Volume weighted average spot price by region (\$/MWh)

	Qld	NSW	VIC	SA	Tas
Average price for 25 Mar – 31 Mar 2012	24	27	27	30	31
% change from previous week*	-6	4	9	14	2
11/12 financial YTD	30	30	27	33	32
% change from 10/11 financial YTD **	-17	-38	-7	-28	6

*The percentage change between last week's average spot price and the average price for the previous week. Calculated on VWA prices prior to rounding.

**The percentage change between the average spot price for the current financial year and the average spot price for the previous financial year. Percentage changes are calculated on VWA prices prior to rounding.

Longer term market trends are attached in Appendix A¹.

Financial markets

Figures 2 to 9 show futures contract² prices traded on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) as at close of trade on Monday 2 April 2012. Figure 2 shows the base futures contract prices for the next three calendar years, and the average over these three years. Also shown are percentage changes³ from the previous week.

¹ Monitoring the performance of the wholesale market is a key part of the AER's role and an overview of the market's performance in the long term is provided on the AER website. Long-term statistics can be found there on, amongst other things, demand, spot prices, contract prices and frequency control ancillary services prices.

To access this information go to

www.aer.gov.au -> Monitoring, reporting and enforcement -> Electricity market reports -> Long-term analysis.

² Futures contracts traded on the ASX are listed by d-cyphaTrade (www.d-cyphatrade.com.au). A futures contract is typically for one MW of electrical energy per hour based on a fixed load profile. A base load profile is defined as the base load period from midnight to midnight Monday to Sunday over the duration of the contract quarter. A peak load profile is defined as the peak-period from 7 am to 10 pm Monday to Friday (excluding Public holidays) over the duration of the contract quarter.

³ Calculated on prices prior to rounding.

Figure 2: Base calendar year futures contract prices (\$/MWh)

	QLD		NSW		VIC		SA	
Calendar Year 2012	40	0%	42	0%	37	0%	38	0%
Calendar Year 2013	55	0%	59*	1%	53	0%	56	0%
Calendar Year 2014	55	0%	59	0%	54	0%	62	-2%
Three year average	50	0%	53	0%	48	0%	52	-1%

Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

* denotes trades in the product.

Figure 3 shows the \$300 cap contract price for Q1 2012 and calendar year 2012 and the percentage change⁴ from the previous week.

Figure 3: \$300 cap contract prices (\$/MWh)

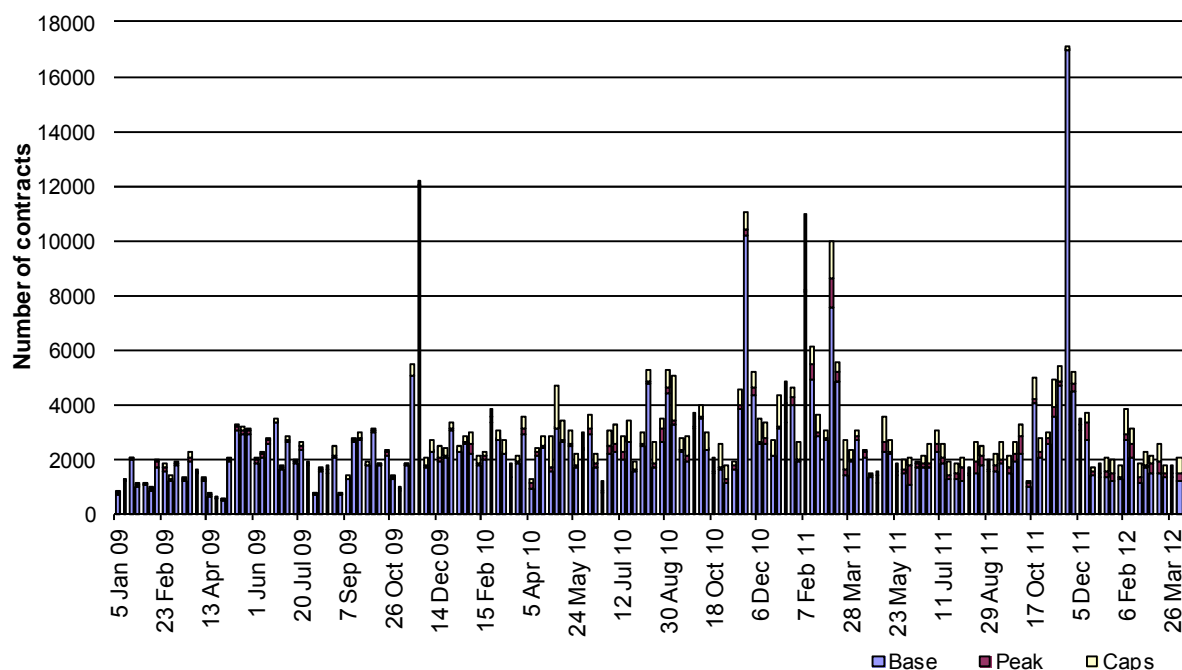
	QLD		NSW		VIC		SA	
Q1 2012 (% change)	1.9*	0%	0.2	0%	0.2*	0%	0.3	0%
2012 (% change)	3.0	-1%	3.7	0%	1.5	6%	2.9	-6%

Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

* denotes trades in the product.

Figure 4 shows the weekly trading volumes for base, peak and cap contracts. The date represents the end of the trading week.

Figure 4: Number of exchange traded contracts per week

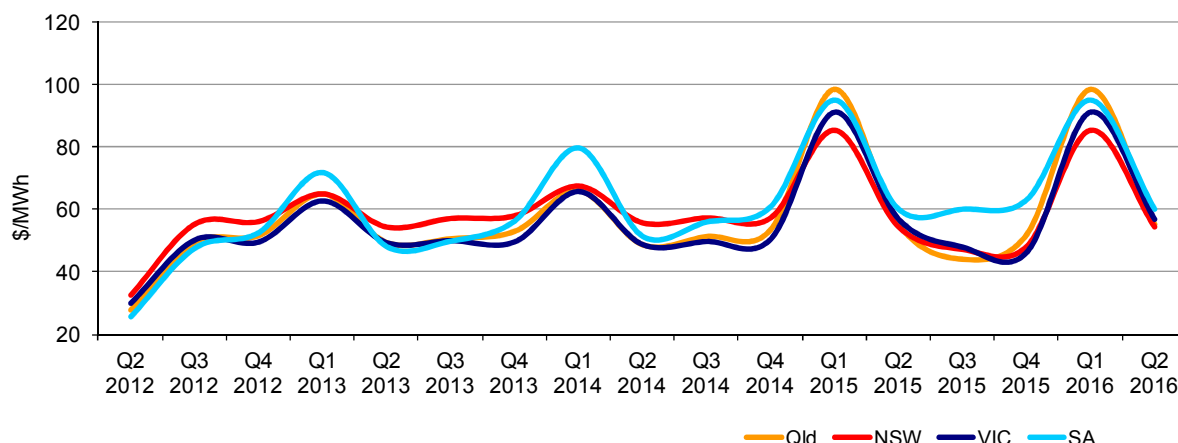


Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

⁴ Calculated on prices prior to rounding.

Figure 5 shows the prices for base contracts for each quarter for the next four financial years.

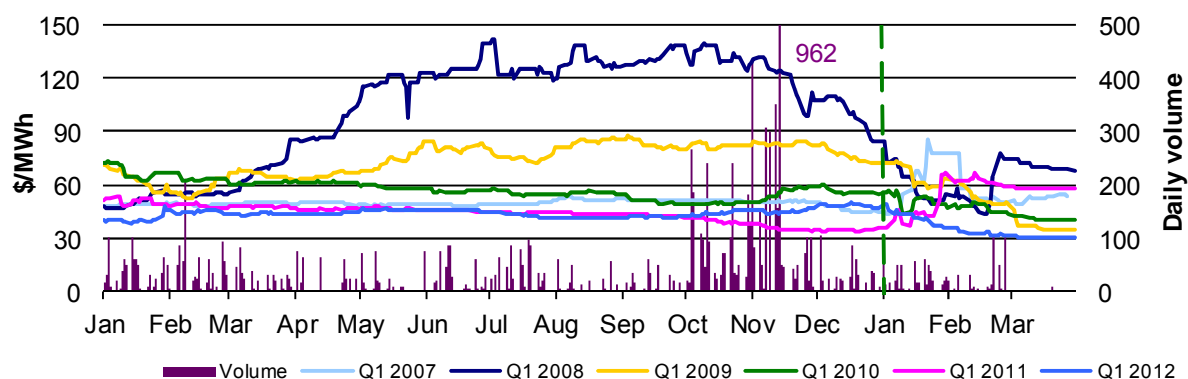
Figure 5: Quarterly base future prices Q1 2012 – Q4 2015



Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

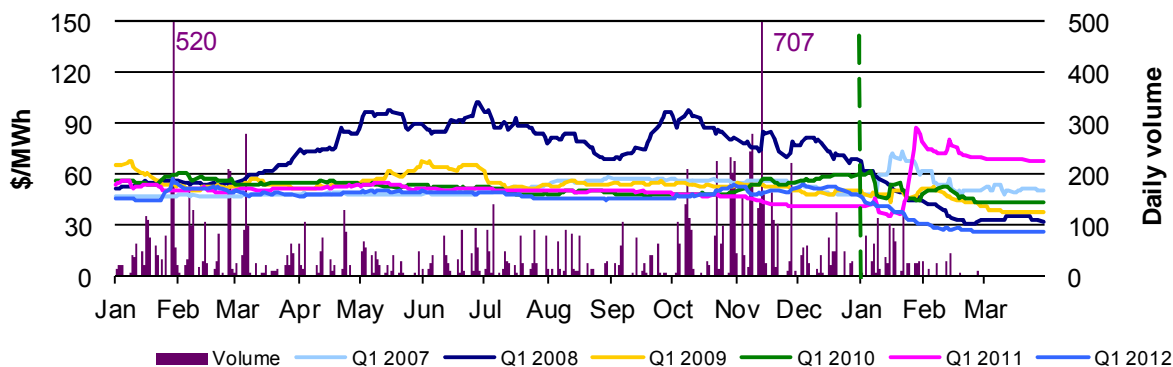
Figures 6-9 compare for each region the closing daily base contract prices for the first quarter of 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Also shown is the daily volume of Q1 2012 base contracts traded. The vertical dashed line signifies the start of the Q1 period for which the contracts are being purchased. To understand the diagrams, the dark-blue line in figure 6 demonstrates that throughout the middle of 2007, the market had an expectation of very high spot prices in the first quarter of 2008.

Figure 6: Queensland Q1 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012



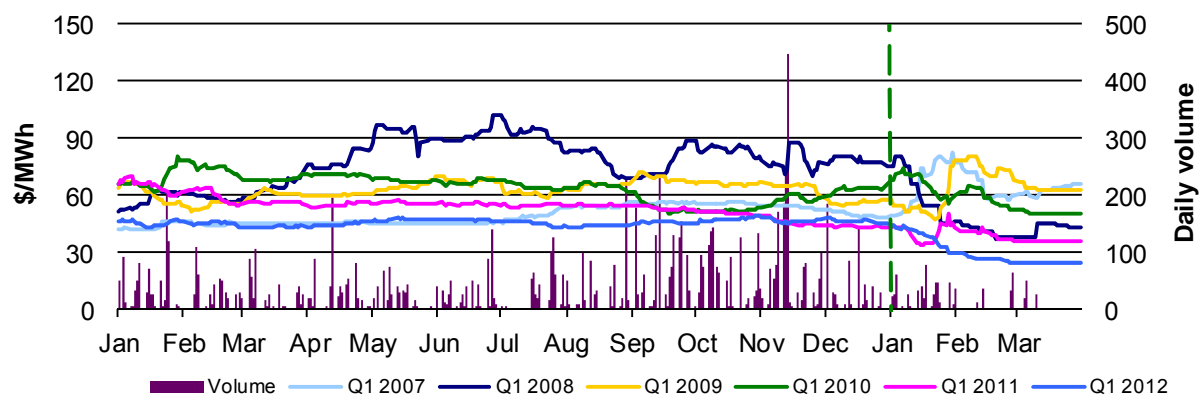
Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

Figure 7: New South Wales Q1 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012



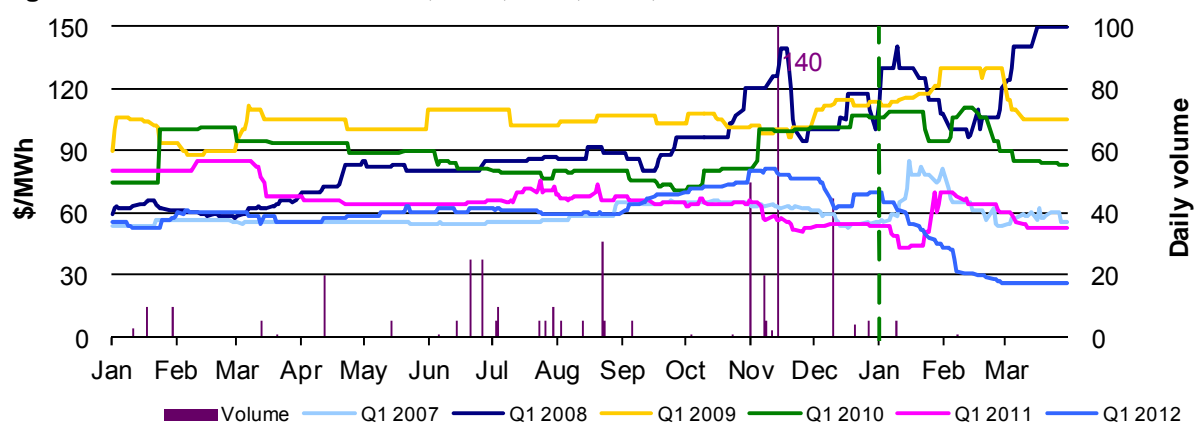
Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

Figure 8: Victoria Q1 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012



Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

Figure 9: South Australia Q1 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012



Source: d-cyphaTrade www.d-cyphatrade.com.au

*The daily volume scale for South Australia is smaller than for other regions to reflect the lower liquidity in the market in South Australia.

Spot market forecasting 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 as participants react to changing market conditions. There were 76 trading intervals throughout the week where actual prices varied significantly from forecasts⁵. This compares to the weekly average in 2010 of 57 counts and the average in 2009 of 103. Reasons for these variances are summarised in Figure 10⁶.

Figure 10: Reasons for variations between forecast and actual prices

	Availability	Demand	Network	Combination
% of total above forecast	0	15	0	0
% of total below forecast	82	2	0	1

⁵ A trading interval is counted as having a variation if the actual price differs significantly from the forecast price either four or 12 hours ahead.

⁶ 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.

Demand and bidding patterns

The AER reviews demand, network limitations and generator bidding as part of its market monitoring to better understand the drivers behind price variations. Figure 11 shows the weekly change in total available capacity at various price levels during peak periods⁷. For example, in Queensland 492 MW less capacity was offered at prices under \$20/MWh this week compared to the previous week. Also included is the change in average demand during peak periods, for comparison.

Figure 11: Changes in available generation and average demand compared to the previous week during peak periods

MW	<\$20/MWh	Between \$20 and \$50/MWh	Total availability	Change in average demand
QLD	-492	-82	-961	-240
NSW	16	-125	-278	-44
VIC	-231	-67	-317	141
SA	-39	106	70	101
TAS	68	-212	23	55
TOTAL	-678	-380	-1463	13

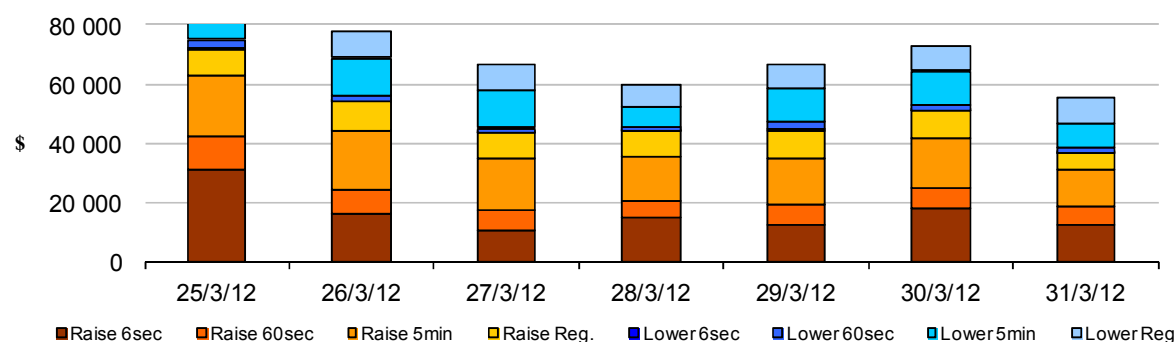
Ancillary services market

The total cost of frequency control ancillary services (FCAS) on the mainland for the week was \$423 000 or less than one per cent of energy turnover on the mainland.

The total cost of FCAS in Tasmania for the week was \$91 000 or around two and a half per cent of energy turnover in Tasmania.

Figure 12 shows the daily breakdown of cost for each FCAS for the NEM.

Figure 12: Daily frequency control ancillary service cost



⁷ A peak period is defined as between 7 am and 10 pm on weekdays.

Detailed NEM Price and Demand Trends

for Weekly Market Analysis
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Table 1: Financial year to date spot market volume weighted average price

Financial year	QLD	NSW	VIC	SA	TAS
2011-12 (\$/MWh) YTD	30	30	27	33	32
2010-11 (\$/MWh) YTD	36	48	29	45	31
Change*	-17%	-38%	-7%	-28%	6%
2010-11 (\$/MWh)	34	43	29	42	31

Table 2: NEM turnover

Financial year	NEM Turnover** (\$, billion)	Energy (TWh)
2011-12 (YTD)	\$4.387	150
2010-11	\$7.445	204
2009-10	\$9.643	206

Table 3: Recent monthly and quarterly spot market volume weighted average price and turnover

Volume weighted average (\$/MWh)	QLD	NSW	VIC	SA	TAS	Turnover (\$, billion)
Nov-11	35	40	27	32	31	0.512
Dec-11	26	26	23	25	26	0.369
Jan-12	35	26	25	28	39	0.447
Feb-12	32	27	27	29	37	0.427
Mar-12 (MTD)	28	26	24	26	36	0.396
Q1 2012	31	26	26	28	37	1.397
Q1 2011	65	90	41	83	27	3.484
Change*	-52%	-71%	-38%	-67%	38%	-59.91%

Table 4: ASX energy futures contract prices at end of 2 April 2012

	QLD		NSW		VIC		SA	
	Base	Peak	Base	Peak	Base	Peak	Base	Peak
Q1 2012								
Price on 26 Mar (\$/MWh)	30	38	26	29	24	29	26	31
Price on 02 Apr (\$/MWh)	30	38	26	29	24	29	26	31
Open interest on 02 Apr	1055	257	2359	595	2166	305	293	5
Traded in the last week (MW)	10	30	0	40	0	5	0	0
Traded since 1 Jan 11 (MW)	11819	722	13913	1755	10631	1341	499	5
Settled price for Q1 11(\$/MWh)	57	96	68	118	35	51	53	93

Table 5: Changes to availability of low priced generation capacity offered to the market

Comparison:	QLD	NSW	VIC	SA	TAS	NEM
January 12 with January 11						
MW Priced <\$20/MWh	77	609	76	-291	-211	259
MW Priced \$20 to \$50/MWh	168	131	226	57	-8	574
February 12 with February 11						
MW Priced <\$20/MWh	-194	-460	-25	-213	154	-738
MW Priced \$20 to \$50/MWh	416	621	98	94	-404	825
March 12 with March 11 (MTD)						
MW Priced <\$20/MWh	-151	-49	-33	-263	95	-402
MW Priced \$20 to \$50/MWh	479	395	43	91	-540	468

*Note: These percentage changes are calculated on VWA prices prior to rounding

** Estimated value