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## Tasmanian second interconnector looking promising

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and TasNetworks have today released the initial report on the feasibility study for a second interconnector across the Bass Strait.

In November last year, the Australian and Tasmanian Governments announced their commitment to jointly fund the \$20 million feasibility and business case assessment for a second interconnector, named Project Marinus.

With \$10 million of funding committed from ARENA, TasNetworks are investigating how a second Bass Strait interconnector - proposed to be called 'Marinus Link' - could be designed, built and form a key part of Australia's future energy network.

In their initial report, TasNetworks found that the Marinus Link could be technically feasible as either a 600 MW or 1200 MW link, delivered in two stages as 600 MW cables. The link would utilise a high voltage direct current cable to cross the Bass Strait.

The study estimates the capital cost of a second interconnector would range from \$1.3 – \$1.7 billion for the 600 MW link or \$1.9 – 3.1 billion for the 1200 MW capacity.

The initial findings indicate a second interconnector could become economically feasible in the early 2030s or as early as the mid 2020s – depending on when existing coal fired power stations retire.

TasNetworks have also have mapped several routes and identified favourable routes that would be likely to achieve environmental and planning approvals and land access. Favourable routes connected Sheffield or Burnie in Tasmania's north west and the Latrobe Valley in Victoria will be identified in early 2019, and is subject to community consultation.

TasNetworks will now undertake further refinement and analysis that will include the service and funding model and pricing arrangements for recovering Marinus Link costs. The next phase of the feasibility will consider the planning and consultation process needed to ensure successful delivery of the Marinus Link.

The final feasibility study report is expected to be released in December 2019.

Last year, ARENA released a report by Hydro Tasmania which confirmed that Tasmania could play a significant role in the transformation of the NEM over the next two decades.

A second interconnector would be needed to unlock Tasmania's potential to expand its existing hydro electric scheme, build new pumped hydro capacity, or invest in new wind farms, as the current Basslink interconnector is at capacity.

ARENA is helping to fund the Battery of the Nation initiatives to set up a blueprint for how Tasmania's renewable resources are developed over the coming decades.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said a second interconnector could see Tasmania's vast pumped hydro resources used to support the National Energy Market.

"Tasmania has vast potential renewable energy resources- including wind and pumped hydro - ready to be developed, and in order to maximise the potential of Tasmania we need to ensure that there is enough interconnection to the mainland."

"There is a lot of work still to be done, but the initial findings are promising and demonstrate how a second interconnector could help unlock Tasmania's potential as the battery of the nation while also provide grid security and reliable supply to both Tasmania and Victoria," Mr Miller said.

TasNetworks CEO Lance Balcombe said: "A second interconnector strengthens the connection between Tasmania, Victoria and the rest of the mainland NEM."

“Marinus Link is a strategic enabler of greater storage potential in Tasmania and further development of renewables in Victoria and Tasmania,” Mr Balcombe said.

“Marinus Link is poised to support energy security by providing a reliable supply of electricity to Tasmanians and other Australians. This is currently being explored through Hydro Tasmania’s Battery of the Nation Project,” he said.

To download the reports, visit [arena.gov.au](http://arena.gov.au)

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