

27 April 2022

David O'Byrne MP  
Parliament House  
Hobart TAS 7000

Dear Mr O'Byrne,

### **Right to Information Request 23 March 2022**

I refer to your request pursuant to the *Right to Information Act 2009* ("RTI Act") made to Hydro Tasmania on 23 March 2022.

I am authorised to make decisions on behalf of Hydro Tasmania in respect of applications for information under the RTI Act.

#### **1. Your Request**

Your request sought the following information:

- 1. All information, including correspondence, relating to the operations of Hydro Tasmania's Automatic Generation Control (AGC) on 1 March 2022;*
- 2. A summary of all generation and dispatch instructions provided to the Tamar Valley Power Station (TVPS) between the hours of 1200 hours (AEST) and 1900 hours (AEST) on 1 March 2022, including a breakdown of any Frequency Control and Ancillary Services (FCAS) dispatched by the TVPS over that same period (if applicable); and*
- 3. Total revenues received by Hydro Tasmania during the 2020-21 financial year through FCAS market participation, including a breakdown of revenues relating to each individual FCAS contingency and regulation market.*

It will be collectively referred to in the body of this letter as "the Request".

#### **2. Determination and Reasons for Determination of Request**

- 2.1. I have undertaken a search of the information held by Hydro Tasmania to locate any records that may be relevant to the Request.

2.2. In relation to Item 1 of the Request, I note communication with your office by email in which it was clarified that all relevant correspondence was conducted by telephone and that this was summarised along with other information regarding the operation of Hydro Tasmania's AGC in an AEMO report (please see Annexure 1: A). Your office advised that full transcripts of the calls were not required at this stage but requested further details of the following paragraph of the report:

*“When RPSS was invoked, AEMO requested that TasNetworks enable its AGC. However, after observing issues with its performance, TasNetworks disabled its AGC and, at 1345 hrs, requested that Hydro Tasmania attempt to operate with its own AGC. Hydro Tasmania made two attempts to operate with its own AGC but found that it caused minor fluctuations in the Tasmania frequency and hence disabled it within the same dispatch interval. For the remainder of the market suspension, both AGC systems were disabled.”*

2.3. In answer, Hydro Tasmania provides the following information:

- Automatic Governor Control (AGC) is a system that smooths out regular frequency movements in the power system (e.g. due to gradual demand changes, not the extreme changes).
- AGC signals to Tasmanian power stations are normally sent out from AEMO systems in Brisbane/Sydney control centres.
- During the internet outage on 1 March that signal could not reach Tasmania due to issues with AEMO's internet back up.
- In response AEMO instructed TasNetworks to use their local backup AGC as per contingency arrangements (as TasNetworks communication system were unaffected)
- TasNetworks successfully enabled their AGC, for several hours until unusual loading of Poatina power station were noticed and could not be easily explained.
- At that point in consultation with Hydro Tasmania, TasNetworks disabled TasNetworks AGC and requested Hydro Tasmania attempt using its back up AGC (which is not a contracted/scheduled service).
- Hydro Tasmania attempted to use its AGC back up twice, but disabled it after several minutes, due to a slow oscillation in the frequency that was observed and could not be easily explained.
- At this point regulation was instead delivered by primary frequency response of Hydro Tasmania and Basslink interconnector. These systems are local responses of the machines/interconnector that do not require communications with external systems.
- This mode of regulating system frequency was shown to regulate the frequency better than AEMO AGC in an earlier trial which was also confirmed on this occasion.

2.4. Hydro Tasmania is not in possession of any information that matches Item 2 of the Request as no such instructions were provided.

2.5. I have determined that Item 3 of the Request is refused on two bases. Firstly, FCAS market revenues for Tasmania generally are refused pursuant to Section 12(3)(c)(i) of the RTI Act on the basis that, to the extent you would have been eligible to be provided with it, that information is otherwise available. A link to information relevant to the Request is provided in Annexure 1 to this letter. Please note that Annexure 1 is provided for your ease of reference only – it should not be considered exhaustive or a complete list of public sources of relevant information.

2.6. Secondly, Hydro Tasmania-specific FCAS revenue data is refused pursuant to Section 38(a)(ii) of the RTI Act. This information is commercially sensitive and disclosure would cause Hydro Tasmania competitive disadvantage in its activities in this space.

### 3. Review of Rights

You are entitled under Section 43 of the RTI Act to apply for a review of the decision made under Part 2 of the determination.

Any request for such a review should be made in writing within twenty (20) working days of receiving this letter and addressed to:

Mr I Brooksbank  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hydro Tasmania  
4 Elizabeth Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Should you have any further questions on the information provided please contact the undersigned.

This request is now considered closed.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Harle  
Legal Counsel  
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e [laura.harle@hydro.com.au](mailto:laura.harle@hydro.com.au)

**Annexure 1**

	<b>Information title or type</b>	<b>Owner of the information</b>	<b>Available at</b>
A	Preliminary Report: Tasmania market suspension on 1 March 2022	AEMO	<a href="https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/market_notices_and_events/market_event_reports/2022/preliminary-report-tas-market-suspension.pdf">https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/market_notices_and_events/market_event_reports/2022/preliminary-report-tas-market-suspension.pdf</a>
B	Ancillary Services Payments and Recovery	AEMO	<a href="https://aemo.com.au/en/energy-systems/electricity/national-electricity-market-nem/data-nem/ancillary-services-data/ancillary-services-payments-and-recovery">https://aemo.com.au/en/energy-systems/electricity/national-electricity-market-nem/data-nem/ancillary-services-data/ancillary-services-payments-and-recovery</a>

## Annexure 2

### **RTI Act, Section 12. Information to be provided apart from Act**

- (3) Assessed disclosure is the method of disclosure of last resort and –  
[...]
- (c) the principal officer of a public authority or a Minister may refuse an application made in accordance with section 13 if the information that is the subject of the application –
    - (i) is otherwise available;

### **RTI Act, Section 38. Information relating to business affairs of public authority**

Information is exempt information –

- (a) if it is –
  - (i) a trade secret of a public authority; or
  - (ii) in the case of a public authority engaged in trade or commerce, information of a business, commercial or financial nature that would, if disclosed under this Act, be likely to expose the public authority to competitive disadvantage;