Case Study: Victorian Big Battery

Blake Matich
Editor | pv magazine
**Incident Timeline**

**Friday, 30th July**

10:10am
Site supervisors noticed visible smoke emitting from one Megapack. The site was electrically isolated and emergency services were called.

10:30am
Emergency services arrived, set up a 25m exclusion zone and started spraying water on equipment surrounding the Megapacks.

4:00pm
Visible flames subside.

**Saturday, 31st July**

**Sunday, 1st August**

**1:00pm**
Fire authorities monitored the continued temperature decline of Megapacks using drone technology.

**Monday, 2nd August**

Megapack doors removed for temperature check and site declared under control.

**3:05pm**
Friday, 30th July

• A fire involving two Tesla Megapacks occurred at the Victorian Big Battery (VBB) during commissioning.

• 150 firefighters responded to the incident.

• Authorities issue Watch and Act Warning for toxic smoke in the nearby areas of Batesford, Bell Post Hill, Lovely Banks and Moorabool.
Unlike at the Vatican, white smoke is not a good sign.
**Incident Timeline | 2**

**Saturday, 31\textsuperscript{st} July**
- Containment and monitoring of temperature decrease.

**Sunday, 1\textsuperscript{st} August:**
- Fire services cease precautionary water.
- Watch and Act Warning for toxic smoke downgraded.
Room to spread out?
Monday, 2\textsuperscript{nd} August:

- Firefighters successfully open all container doors.
- Incident declared under control.
- Fire crews remained on site for the next 24 hours “as a precaution in case of reignition,” taking temperature readings every two hours, said the CFA.
Investigation

• A multi-agency investigation was launched into the VBB blaze.
• “Statement of Technical Findings” published at the end of September.
• Full independent incident report due in November.
• Energisation testing has resumed at the VBB.
Conclusion

• The fire could likely have been mitigated had monitoring services not been switched to an "off-line mode".
• This error and other lessons learned have been complied into a list of undertaken actions to prevent "a recurrence".
• Energisation testing has now resumed at the VBB and Neoen is still aiming for an operational date in time for Australia's high-grid demand summer.
Thank you to the Country Fire Authority and Fire Rescue Victoria for the incident information and imagery used in this case study.

Images: Fire Rescue Victoria
Timeline: Red Havas
ESV Report:
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