

# Case Study: Victorian Big Battery

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Editor | pv magazine



## **Incident Timeline**

Fire authorities monitored the continued temperature decline of Megapacks using drone technology.

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

3:05pm



#### 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.

Fire authorities monitored the continued temperature decline of Megapacks using drone technology.

#### 1:00pm

CFA stopped applying the precautionary water being used on site. CFA approached Megapacks to monitor surface temperatures.

#### 4:00pm

Visible flames subside.



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# **Incident Timeline** | 1

### Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

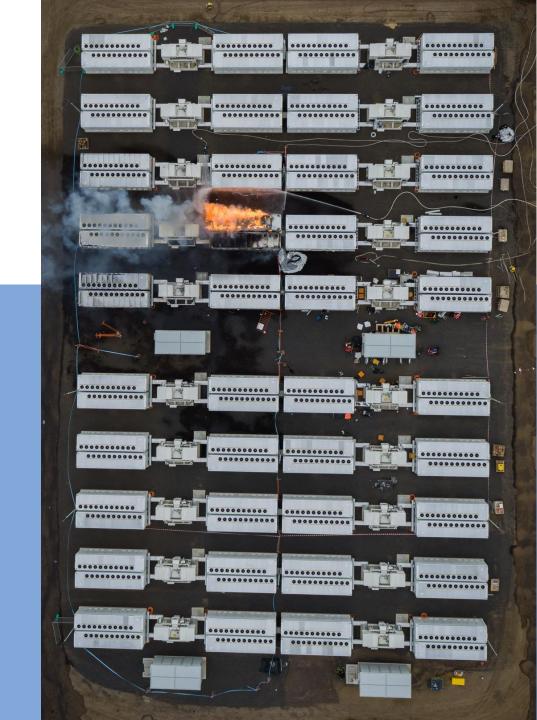
# **Incident Timeline** | 2

## Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> July

 Containment and monitoring of temperature decrease.

## Sunday, 1st August:

- Fire services cease precautionary water.
- Watch and Act Warning for toxic smoke downgraded.







Room to spread out?



# **Incident Timeline** | 3

#### Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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!

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:** 

https://esv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/VBB StatementOfFindings FINAL 28Sep2021.pdf

pv magazine links:

https://www.pv-magazine.com/magazine-archive/moorabool-burning/

https://www.pv-magazine-australia.com/2021/08/02/fire-at-victorian-big-battery-now-under-control/

https://www.pv-magazine-australia.com/2021/09/28/australias-biggest-battery-cleared-for-testing-

following-fire-fallout/