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Heat shorts NSW, Qld power supplies

By Rod Myer
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THE fragility of Australia's power supplies became evident yesterday when power prices in NSW and Queensland spiked almost to the **limit** of \$10,000 per megawatt hour in the afternoon.

Generation cuts in very hot conditions led to record demand levels for the second day in a row.

So dire was the situation in NSW that in mid-afternoon generation output, at just over 10,000 megawatts, was over 200 megawatts below demand.

Demand peaked at close to the previous day's 13,188 megawatts, an all-time record caused by the effects of spiralling use of air-conditioning in very hot conditions in much of the state.

Victoria, where conditions were cooler, was less affected. However, early in the afternoon prices topped \$1200 per MWh in Victoria and South Australia as Victoria's generators pumped excess power through the Snowy Interconnector to NSW.

The shortage appears to have been caused by plant failure and planned outages in NSW and Queensland. **About 700 megawatts of production appeared to drop out in both states, according to information from power market software producer Global-Roam.**

One industry observer said that if the heatwave had extended across Victoria and South Australia there would have been risks of widespread blackouts. The provision of extra power supplies in Victoria has been put behind schedule due to delays in commissioning the Laverton North power station and Basslink cable to Tasmania.

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