

Monday 6 September 2010

SP AusNet restores power where safe

SP AusNet crews have been working around the clock to restore power as quickly and safely as possible to central, and eastern Victorian residents affected by the severe and damaging winds and rain that lashed the state over the weekend.

SP AusNet spokesperson Joe Adamo said the strong wind gusts and flooding had resulted in multiple trees coming to ground and debris falling across powerlines.

"We have just witnessed some of the worst weather Victoria has seen in 12 years, with the severity of the storm affecting Victorians across the state. We are asking all customers to be patient as our crews attempt to restore power supply as quickly and safely as possible.

"Our crews have restored power in most storm-affected areas covering the outer eastern parts of the state since the early hours of Sunday, however there are smaller pockets of our network, particularly in the Dandenong Ranges that are still experiencing some outages due to high water levels and fallen trees.

"As at 7am yesterday morning, we had around 20,000 customers without power. Currently, we have just over 3,300 customers affected in the Dandenong Ranges, Sassafras, Olinda and Emerald and a few hundred in Whitfield due to a powerpole dangerously close to flood waters.

"These winds have resulted in at least 50 major outages, each affecting upwards of 50 customers across our network and north-east Victoria, particularly in the Dandenong Ranges and surrounds. We are working to repair poles down, damage to conductors and vegetation across powerlines.

"Due to the extent of the damage and the nature of the environment this is not a quick-fix scenario, and we are working to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. In many cases crews are rebuilding poles and wires from the ground up.

"We are urging residents who are currently without power to be patient. As is the nature of the electricity network, a fault may not be visible in your street but power may be temporarily lost to you.

"For safety reasons, we encourage residents to be vigilant during this situation and keep away from fallen or damaged powerlines or other hazards.

"We appreciate people's patience during this critical time, as crews work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power," Mr Adamo said.

SP AusNet advises people to keep clear of fallen powerlines at all times and report them immediately to its 24-hour faults hotline on **13 17 99**.

Further information is also available on SP AusNet's website www.sp-ausnet.com.au.