

12 midday - Wednesday 2 February 2011

East Gippsland power update

As a result of the Nowa Nowa bushfire currently burning in East Gippsland, there are approximately 3,800 SP AusNet customers currently experiencing a loss of power supply in the surrounding region.

SP AusNet spokesperson Joe Adamo said the biggest challenge for crews was gaining access to parts of the fire area to assess and conduct the necessary remedial works.

"Until it's deemed safe enough by emergency services for our crews to be escorted into the area, we are required to stay well clear of the fire-affected region.

Mr Adamo said that SP AusNet was making arrangements for alternative energy resources such as high-voltage generators, to be transported to assist the townships in the fire-affected regions currently without power.

"We have semi-trailers on standby waiting to transport generators as soon as the roads are deemed safe enough for our crews to enter.

"We aim to have these high-voltage generators connected to the townships of Orbost, Mallacoota, Marlo and Cann River by 6pm tonight," Mr Adamo said.

Mr Adamo stressed that the generators will only supply minimal power to the townships mentioned above.

"We advise customers in these townships to limit their power consumption when connected to generators.

"This means no use of air conditioners or industry machinery and we ask all trade workshops such as mechanic outlets or welding factories to limit their consumption.

"Our advice to residents in the surrounding areas of Club Terrace, Cabbage Tree Creek, Combinbar, Tonghi Creek, Noorinbee, Genoa and Gipsy Point is to be prepared to be without power for an extended time, possibly for up to a couple of days. We will always endeavour to contact and notify these customers," Mr Adamo said.

"We are now under the guidance of the emergency services. When they deem the area is safe for us to enter, we will assess the damage and aim to restore power to these customers as quickly and safely as possible," Mr Adamo said.

"We are working closely with authorities to ensure the safety of the community and our employees remains our number one priority. We would like to thank customers for their patience and understanding," Mr Adamo said.

Customers wanting to report a fault are urged to contact SP AusNet's 24 hour faults line on **131 799**.

For media enquiries please contact Joe Adamo
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