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Prepare now for summer storms

With summer approaching, electricity distributor AusNet Services is urging property owners to clear vegetation from private powerlines to reduce the likelihood of summer storms causing power outages.

AusNet Services' Regional Customer & Community Manager, Craig Velt, said the company has a large vegetation management program but it's a shared responsibility, with residents responsible for keeping vegetation on their property clear of their service cable or private electric lines.

"Each year, we spend approximately \$40 million on our vegetation management program inspecting and then clearing about 135,000 trees from 49,000 kilometres of powerlines throughout our network to ensure a safe and reliable supply of electricity to customers," Mr Velt said.

"Importantly, property owners also have a responsibility to keep vegetation clear from their service cable or private electric lines supplying their property.

"Summer storms bring strong winds and heavy rains, so now is a good time to clear vegetation and reduce the potential for property damage and power outages.

"Importantly, under no circumstances should property owners attempt to climb a power pole or prune vegetation near a powerline. Please contact a suitably trained and experienced contractor to carry out the clearing work," he said.

To help you manage summer storms and possible power outages AusNet Services suggests you:

- Have emergency contact details easily available
- Have a fully charged torch with fresh batteries and a battery-operated radio
- Ensure mobile phones are fully charged
- If your garage door is electric, ensure you know how to open it manually
- Have a backup pump if you rely on mains electricity for your water supply
- Time permitting, turn your fridge and freezer to a cooler setting to maintain food freshness

During or after a storm, property owners are encouraged to report threatening trees or damaged powerlines to AusNet Services' 24-hour faults hotline 13 17 99.

"When property owners provide accurate and timely information, we are able to pinpoint threatening tree locations and damaged powerlines and send crews directly to those locations," she added.

AusNet Services advises people to keep well away of fallen powerlines at all times and report it immediately to the 24-hour faults hotline. Further information is also available on AusNet Services' website at www.ausnetservices.com.au.

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