



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday 28 August, 2023

### **Defect Solution in Progress**

TasNetworks is working with regulators to investigate and rectify a situation involving defective devices on some Tasmanian buildings.

The fault has been detected in the shear bolts of fuse holders (of 100 ampere current) manufactured by Michaud - installed on some homes and businesses in recent years.

The device poses no direct danger to people while left alone and left in place. It is found at a building's electrical point-of-attachment (POA), which is usually overhead and out-of-reach, and generally only accessed by electrical contractors. The device is not found in customer fuse boxes.

The issue was detected by a TasNetworks electrician whose spanner became electrified while tightening a plastic shear bolt on one of the fuse holders, causing sparking. The electrician was wearing LV insulating gloves and wasn't injured. Follow-up testing confirmed the shear bolt does conduct electricity, and therefore fails insulation requirements. The holder body itself is not conductive.

TasNetworks immediately reported the fault to the manufacturer, Michaud, and the product supplier, Preformed Line Products Australia (PLP). The business also notified the regulator, Consumer Building and Occupational Services (CBOS), and is liaising with the agency on what rectifying action is required.

TasNetworks CEO, Seán Mc Goldrick, said the business has initiated hazard alerts, safety directives and control measures to protect employees and contractors. It's also running a public safety campaign reminding people to stay at least one metre from their home's point-of-attachment.

"Our advice to Tasmanians is clear and simple: please do nothing. Under no circumstances should you inspect or interfere with these devices," Dr Mc Goldrick said.

"There's no cause for concern. Under normal circumstances, the conductive bolts don't pose a threat to homes or businesses – inside or out. And it's completely safe to use your fuse box as normal.

"This is purely about a point-of-attachment component conducting electricity when it's not supposed to, and the risk that could pose to people - usually professionals - who might have contact with it. Therefore, please **don't** test or inspect your home or business point-of-attachment, where the defect could potentially exist," he said.

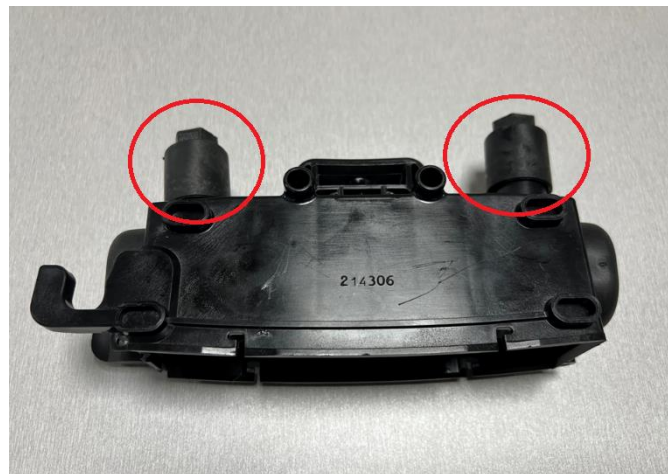
TasNetworks' Head of Health, Safety and Environment, Ed Chetcuti, said the business is making the defect publically known out of an abundance of caution, and in service of full and early disclosure.

“We’re working with CBOS, the manufacturer and the supplier to investigate the extent of the problem, and seek corrective action,” Mr Chetcuti said.

“Early indications suggest the defect is limited to a batch of about 2,000 devices, rather than all Michaud holders (of 100-amp current) installed in recent years. That should hopefully allow for a more targeted and efficient resolution,” he said.

In correspondence to PLP (the supplier), TasNetworks has made clear it expects the supplier to meet all of its obligations under Australian Consumer Law, where applicable - to notify, recall, retrieve and report to the Regulator on this matter.

The Michaud fuse holder in question is pictured below, with the potentially conductive shear bolts highlighted. Again – this device is only potentially located at a building’s electrical point-of-attachment (the point where your service line joins the building), which is generally out-of-reach for home and business owners. It’s generally only accessed by electrical professionals using a pole or ladder.



**More information:** Rowan Dix - 0436 919980 / [media@tasnetworks.com.au](mailto:media@tasnetworks.com.au)