



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday 8 March, 2024

### **Senseless vandals leave others in the dark**

TasNetworks and about 2,000 customers will cop the consequences of a senseless act of vandalism in Tasmania's far north-east.

Vandals recently severely damaged an Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) on a TasNetworks transmission pole near Scottsdale.

It's believed they tried to pull off part of the transmission pole using a towline attached from a vehicle, damaging the OPGW in the process.

Repairing the damage, plus associated expenses, will cost TasNetworks an estimated \$300,000 and require more than 2,000 customers to go without power for up to 10 hours in late March.

TasNetworks' Principal Field Engineer, James Goodger, said the vandalism was a dangerous and reckless act.

"These vandals were risking deadly electrocution if the wire had been dislodged instead of just damaged. We have safety protections in place, but they may not have saved someone who deliberately ripped a live cable from a pole," Mr Goodger said.

"Unfortunately, to complete those repairs, about 2,000 local customers will experience a power outage for a period of up to 10 hours, on or around 25 March. We've written to all affected customers explaining the situation, and will also send standard SMS notifications about the exact repair date.

"We appreciate customers' support and understanding. We share their frustration at this senseless vandalism," Mr Goodger said.

TasNetworks apologises for the inconvenience to customers who'll be impacted by the outage. The number of customers affected by the repair outage could've topped 3,500, but TasNetworks will employ network switching and provide some generators at its own expense to ensure essential services, including local schools, can retain power.

The vandalism incident's been reported to police. TasNetworks encourages anyone with information to contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

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