

Fruit bats causing power outages

Power and Water is working to reduce the power outages caused by fruit bats in the Mataranka area.

There is an infestation of bats along a new section of power line that connects Jilkminggan to the power grid. It is these bats that are causing the power outages.

Every year fruit bats cause power outages in communities across the Top End. When fruit bats cluster around power line insulators they can form a bridge from the conductor to the steel cross arms, which short circuits the high voltage system and causes a power outage.

Power and Water cannot remove the fruit bats from the area, but they are implementing strategies to reduce the number of power outages.

Recently Power and Water built a new 22kV power line which runs from the Katherine – Mataranka power grid, and supplies the community of Jilkminggan.

Networks crews recently installed a tri-fuse assembly and insulator guards along this line.

This equipment will allow the line to Jilkminggan to be isolated if there is a fault on this section of line. This will ensure the power will stay on for customers in Mataranka, as it will allow Power and Water to switch around the fault.

Insulator guards have also been added which will help keep the bats off the insulators on top of the power poles.

While these measures will greatly reduce the number of customers affected during outages, and reduce the number of outages for Mataranka residents, some flickering or momentary interruptions to power will still occur.

These short outages are a result of equipment working automatically to restore the power line to normal service. If this automatic response is not successful, Power and Water crews must patrol the line to find the cause.

To report a fault on the power line, call Power and Water on 1800 245 092.