



# SA Power Networks

## Possums and powerlines don't mix

One of the great things about living in the Adelaide Hills is the abundance of wildlife and vegetation. Unfortunately, one of the most prevalent forms of wildlife in the area, Ringtail Possums, pose a real problem when it comes to supplying your electricity.

### How do possums cause power outages?

ABC (Aerial Bundle Cable) is an insulated overhead power cable used in the Hills. ABC was originally introduced in the wake of the Ash Wednesday bushfires to reduce the risk of bare overhead lines starting fires by sparking against trees or other lines in high winds. ABC also allows for less clearance between vegetation and powerlines.

Possums use ABC lines as highways to travel from one location to the next. ABC is thicker than normal electricity wire so it's easier for possums to walk along. There is also less clearance required between tree branches and powerlines in areas with ABC, making it more accessible for possums to climb straight from trees onto the cables. These factors, combined with the Ringtail's aversion to walking along the ground, have resulted in more possum activity on electricity cables.

Unfortunately, possums that come into contact with electrical equipment are at risk of electrocution. Momentary and sustained power interruptions also occur when the network's protection equipment is activated by possums on the lines. In fact, possums are the main cause of many momentary interruptions where power is automatically restored after two to five seconds. This happens more frequently when possums are most active—usually in the warmer months of November through to April, and between the hours of 10pm and 5am.

### How many interruptions are caused by possums?

On average, possums are found to be the cause of 60 sustained high voltage interruptions each year. These interruptions usually occur at night when possums are most active, and require an SA Power Networks crew to attend the area to restore supply. Each year we also receive several customer complaints of possums getting into customers' roofs from the SA Power Networks line that services their home. On investigation, we find there are usually several points of entry for possums, such as vegetation overhanging near the roof, pay TV cables, Telstra wires and drainpipes. Consequently we recommend that customers examine and repair the possum's point of entry to their roof, rather than requesting modifications to the SA Power Networks service wire.

### Possum problem areas

The areas worst affected by possums causing interruptions to power supply are the Adelaide Hills and foothills, where vegetation and wildlife are most abundant.

### What is SA Power Networks doing about it?

As part of SA Power Networks' ongoing Reliability Improvement Plan, possum guards have been installed at 660 problem locations over the last nine years in order to limit possum access to electrical equipment and reduce the likelihood of interruptions.

Although the possum guards have proven effective once installed in these areas, it is difficult to eliminate the problem completely.

We will continue to review all interruptions and where we see a trend of possum activity causing outages, we will investigate and install guards as required to manage the problem.

For more information, please contact us on 13 12 61.

For further information contact:  
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1



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