

**THE ELECTRICITY OUTAGES AFFECTING FAR WEST NSW IN OCTOBER
2024**

Organisation: Broken Hill Musicians' Club

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Partially
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Broken Hill Musicians Club – Submission.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY –
Committee on Environment and Planning.

Inquiry into the electricity outages affecting Far
West NSW in October 2024.

Broken Hill Musicians Club – Submission.

Completed by:

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Executive Summary:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Planning Regarding the electricity outages that impacted Far West NSW in October 2024.

I completed this submission on behalf of the Broken Hill Musicians Club, where I act as the CEO and Company Secretary. The Musicians Club operated as a community hub. This was possible due to the Club's two large generators, the large size of the venue and the support we received from the Club industry.

This submission covers outages on the main line X2 during the period of 2019-2023 and the effect these outages had on residents and businesses of the Far West, The poor integration of renewable energy into the Far West grid and the inconsistent statements from Transgrid spokespeople around renewables and how they won't admit that it is almost impossible to use the renewable generation during an outage from line X2. Transgrid solution to this problem is to sell the two backup gas turbines, something that must be stopped at all costs.

There are no signs that lessons learnt from past power outages were implemented leading to the October 2024 emergency that saw massive impacts across the community. These outages affected people's mental health, left them thousands of dollars out of pocket from spoiled food, stood down from employment without pay and businesses shut for long periods.

During the outages, telecommunication services failed due to Telstra's lack of investment in backup power supplies to their cell towers, leaving all the of the Far West unable to call triple 0 in an emergency.

Urgently, more needs to be done to build redundancy into the power supply of the Far West, and the residents and businesses of the Far West should not have to pay extra for what is classed as a basic service and waiting for Hydro Store to be built is not a viable option no matter how exciting the technology is.

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1.0. The Preparation and Mitigation Strategies in Place by Electricity Providers in Far West NSW in the Event of a Major Electricity Outage:

There were seven outages on the 220kV Line X2 transmission line over the period of 2019 – 2024 (appendix #1 – #11). On average, outages on Line X2 occur 1.4 times per year, as noted below.

- 17th of May 2019 (appendix #8).
- 28th of August 2019 (appendix #7).
- 2nd of October 2019 (appendix #6).
- 25th of July 2022 (appendix #5).
- 5th of November 2023 (appendix #2-4).

Another further outage on Line X2 occurred only one month after the reconnection from the October 2024 outage in December 2024 (brown 2024). These regular outages show that strong preparation and mitigation strategies are needed and need to be reviewed regularly.

Prior to the failure of the one remaining backup generator on Monday, the 21st of October 2024 (Lim & Brown 2024), Transgrid and the Government lacked urgency. However, the Government would have been acting on the information provided by Transgrid, which at that time was downplaying the urgency of the situation at Broken Hill through local contractors were warning residents (appendix #9).

There is no denying the fact that Transgrid had known of significant issues with the second large-scale generator since November 2023 when it failed over the weekend of the 4th-5th of November 2023 during work on the Buronga Interconnector for the Energy Connect Project (Conner 2023).

After the November 2023 outage and breakdown of the backup generator, Transgrid laid the blame for the failure on the use of solar panels and the Silverton Wind Farm, stating the following on ABC Broken Hill Breakfast program on Monday 6th of November 2023.

“One of the generators tripped, and the signal was lost momentarily on the system, and we saw all the rooftop solar come on all at once, so we went from 2 megawatts up to over 16 megawatts in an instant, so one generator, as hard as it worked to ramp that quickly it just couldn't do it so the generator came offline” – Marie Jordan, Transgrid executive network manager (Conner 2023).

Whether or not the second generator remained out of service from November 2023 or was fixed before failing again during testing in mid-2024 is not the point. It had become obvious that every time the Far West is discounted from Line X2, the nearly forty-year-old diesel turbines struggle with rooftop solar energy generation in the grid.

Even though this interview was conducted before a January 2024 letter requesting a waiver for the operation of the Broken Hill Gas Turbine Facility (appendix #23), [REDACTED] would have knowledge of this application at the time. It would have also known that, as per Appendix #23 that for the foreseeable future, renewable generators are not able to service Broken Hill and the Far West during an outage of Line X2.

The lack of urgency from Transgrid and the Government to fix the issues and increase emergency redundancy power generation to the Far West is what ultimately led to the October 2024 Far West power emergency, it's only through luck and not good management that no one died during the October 2024 outages.

1.1. The Implementation of Recommendations from Previous Electricity Outages in Far West NSW:

There is no evidence of any implementations from previous electricity outages in the Far West, particularly the outlying communities outside of Broken Hill. A review of a December 2019 ABC Broken Hill news article (Volkofsky 2019) writes of five power outages in six months in Menindee, leaving residents frightened to sleep. Also, of note is the failure of the telecommunications when the power is out, something further needs to be addressed.

The November 2023 power outage should have been a wakeup call to Transgrid that recommendations from the Far West community need to be implemented and that fact Transgrid did not inform the Government that there were issues with backup turbines due to renewables is a breach of the energy supply licence (Brown 2024), with their solution being to sell the turbines (appendix #23)

At the time of the November 2023 outage, Transgrid's executive network manager, Marie Jordan, was quoted on the ABC Broken Hill Breakfast Show as saying, "Power supplier would work alongside the wind farm to ensure it would be able to assist in future power outages" (Conner 2023).

Transgrid can't even follow its own reconditions to ensure a reliable power supply to the Far West. Based on the research (AEMO 2024), I would say that the nearly forty-year-old gas turbines are incompatible with an islanded grid that is simultaneously producing renewables.

Transgrid's solution to this problem is to sell or lease the backup gas turbines to a third party (appendix #23), thus passing the responsibility of the clearly stated condition of their licence to a third party.

2.0. Impacts of the Outages on the Community:

Community concern about the power outage started on the morning of Thursday, the 17th of October 2024, when the community of Broken Hill and Far West realised that the backup gas turbine was powering the area. These community concerns came from previous failures of the backup turbine when the area was disconnected from the 220kV line, particularly the 12-hour outage on the 5th of November 2023, when one of the turbines failed (appendix #2-4)

In the initial stages of the outage, only Broken Hill was powered by the backup turbine (ABC Broken Hill 2024), and as such, load shedding did not commence until the peak period on Friday night (ABC 2024). I believe these couple of nights of stable power, coupled with the lack of transparency from Transgrid about the exact state of the backup gas turbines, created an environment of complacency with a lack of urgency within the Government in Sydney.

While Transgrid was downplaying, the local contractors working at the substation and people with knowledge of the local substation setup were warning that the one backup turbine was struggling under the load and to prepare for the worst-case scenario of the turbine failing and the area being without power for a long period of time, a de-identified message that I received is provided in appendix #9.

2.1. Impacts on the Residents of the Far West:

Below is an outline of some of the impacts the outages had on the residents of the Far West.

- Mental health suffered under the consistent threat of power loss with no notice.
- Residents with pre-existing mental health issues faced further.
- Local HSC students studying were adversely affected by the power outages.
- Families with children's mental health suffered.
- Thousands of dollars worth of food was spoiled during a cost-of-living crisis.
- Residents with chronic medical conditions lives were put at risk.
- Sewage pumps stopped working in Wilcannia, resulting in the backing up of raw sewage.
- Water pumps stopped working in Wilcannia, resulting in the drinking water running low.
- Mobile phones unable to make calls due to cell towers having no power.
- Landlines down due to the NBN requiring mains power to operate.
- Residents could not make Triple 0 emergency calls due to cell towers being down.
- RFDS planes were unable to communicate with base operations in Broken Hill.
- Mine employees stood down, either with no pay or having to use leave balances.
- Many retail and hospitality workers stood down with no pay.

Residents with medical conditions that used 'administering your own at-home' treatments were put in a life-threatening situation, with an ABC Broken Hill article about a Barkindji-Malyangaapa man requiring six-hour-long dialysis treatment three times a week and the risks the power outages were putting him at as the machine only had 20 minutes of battery (McCure 2024)

Personally, I had a member of the Musicians Club contact me on behalf of another member who was in medical distress because he was unable to operate his CPAT machine, and with communications failing, that member was able to contact me as my home NBN modem was connected to battery backup I was able to make further contact with a third party who assisted in getting a generator delivered (appendix #11).

The HSC was being sat during the rolling power outages, disrupting studies during the most important period of their High Schooling. Students noted that the outages were having an adverse effect on their mental health, adding additional stress to already stressful time, losing train of thought while studying and losing motivation.

Not only have these studies had to deal with the disruption of the covid years, but the Willyama High students have also had to deal with the stress of their school being closed down in January and being relocated to Broken Hill High after Willyama was found riddled with mould (Brown et al. 2024).

A review of local social media pages shows a community under extreme stress and anxiety. Many had concerns for family members they were unable to contact. Below are three example posts that were posted on local social media pages during the outages.

Post #1 (appendix #10):

A local resident shared that they had the police visit them for a welfare check due to concerns from family members from outside of Broken Hill being unable to reach them due to the mobile phone network being down.

Post #2 (appendix #12):

This local resident explains the anxiety, the roller coaster of emotions and the anger they feel about the situation. The person goes on to state how frustrated they are at the finger-pointing, blame game and confusion of the very vague updates on the situation.

Post #3 (appendix #22):

This person mentions the high temperatures during the outages, stating that it's a colossal disaster with most of the town having to throw out the contents of their fridge and freezer. The person also mentioned the 260 grilled chickens that Woolworths sold during the outages and that many families are travelling to other centres to stay with family until the power is fully restored.

2.2. Impact on Business of the Far West:

Below is an outline of the effects the power outages had on Far West businesses.

- Local mining operations were suspended with workers stood down.
- Local mining operation Rasp Mine was in the handover process to a new owner.
- Cafes and restaurants are unable to trade, with product losses in the thousands.
- Loss of revenue.
- Supermarkets loss of stock.
- Loss of refrigerated medication from Chemists.
- Unsafe working environment due to the loss of power
- Employees stood down with no pay across the Far West.
- Mental health issues for owners and employees.

2.3. Support the Broken Hill Musicians Club Provided the Community During the Power Outages:

The Broken Hill Musicians Club mobilised quickly as a support centre for the Broken Hill community. With two backup generators and the large size of the venue,

- Storage of medication for local doctor surgeries, community members and staff.
- Free tea and coffee facilities.
- Parent's Room with facilities to serialise baby bottles.
- Free cold water.
- A menu of \$10 meals.
- Phone charging station.
- Donations to local charities to assist in the recovery.
- Free Wifi, one of the only ways to access connectivity during the Mobile Cell Tower outages.
- Able to leverage support from the Club industry statewide through our peak body, ClubsNSW.
- The Musician's Club was the ABC Broken Hill backup emergency broadcast site in the event the local studio's generator failed. This would mean in the event of generator failure at the local studio emergency broadcast would still be able to go out to the community.

During any natural disaster or emergency, the Musicians Club, with its large capacity to accommodate over 700 people and with two generators available to power the entire venue, including air cooling systems, kitchen and refrigeration, there is no other venue, either Government or private, that has this ability in Broken Hill.

Clubs “Provided Something That No Local, State or Federal Government Could”

Image 1.0. Roy Buttler – State Member for Barwon.

“In Times of Need, People Have Turned to Their Local Club” Says Kevin Anderson

Image 1.1. Kevin Anderson – State Member of Tamworth and Shadow Minister for Gaming and Racing.

2.4. Club Industry Support to the Far West:

From the first notice of the transmission towers being down and the Far West operating on the one emergency generator, ClubsNSW was informed that the situation was delicate and that the outlying areas outside of Broken Hill had yet to have power restored.

ClubsNSW used circulars and ClubLife articles to get the message out to other clubs and industry partners of the urgent requirements of Far West communities. As the situation deteriorated from Monday, the 21st of October 2024 (appendix #14), they provided logistic support and administration support (appendix #13&16) so I could focus on the urgent needs of the Broken Hill community, club employees and members.

ClubsNSW organised and provided the following support to Broken Hill and the Far West.

- Pallets of water to Broken Hill and Wilcannia, with Wilcannia being urgent due to low portable water supply.
- Fifteen 44-gallon drums for diesel storage were secured by Coomealla Club and driven to Broken Hill by the Club CEO as Broken Hill had no supply (appendix #13&19).
- Organised food trucks on the East Coast to be on standby for the worst-case scenario of a complete failure of the emergency generator.
- Daily online team meetings to gauge the support required. These meetings were held morning and afternoon during the worst period of the emergency.

If it was not for the support of the Club industry and our peak body, ClubsNSW, the Musicians Club would have likely run out of diesel for the generators by early afternoon on the 22nd of October 2024, resulting in the closure of the largest operating venue in Broken Hill during a 36c day. This would have resulted in the 500 people in the Club at the time seeking respite from the heat being asked to head home to sit in un-airconditioned homes, plus the additional 1000 people that passed through the club from mid-afternoon seeking respite having no option.

Further the Club industry mobilised and provided financial support to the Far West recovery with donations following to charities such as LifeLine and Vinnes. The Mounties Group Sydney provided the Musicians Club \$100,000 to be donated to Far West organisations in need. To date, \$44,000 worth of donations have been provided, and others are underway, which are listed below.

- 1000lt of Diesel for the community of Menindee
- 4 x 240lt (44-gallon drums) of diesel for the Wilcannia Golf Club, freight donated.
- 47 x \$300 food vouchers.
- \$10,000 donation to St Vincent De Paul Society Broken Hill.
- \$11,500 grant for a local medical practice to purchase a 10 AMP Medisafe Plus Fridge UPS.
- \$5000 grant to the Ronald McDonald House Adelaide.

Projects in progress.

- Grant to install a permanent generator for a local chemist.
- \$2000 individual grants for local business grants to assist with lost stock.

2.5. Impact of Outages on Club Operations:

Although the Musicians Club was able to operate on a backup generator, there were still considerable impacts on the operation of the Club, with the Club-owned Silver City Cinema being closed for a month to assist in conserving energy during peak periods and to protect sensitive projecting and sound systems. During the closure of the Silver City Cinema, the Musicians Club continued to pay Cinema staff who could not be redeployed to the Club.

With the Club continuing to operate as a community service during the power emergency, there were limited stock losses. Revenue, although down from providing food at cost price and providing other services free for the community the Club's was not hit as hard as businesses had to close.

The Clubs's experienced several plant and equipment failures from the unreliable power and the constant changing from mains to generator power as the Club was unable to isolate itself from the main grid and operate on generators alone. Below is a list of impacts on the Club's operation.

- \$10,000 in diesel costs to keep the generators operating.
- Generator repair costs have a sensor failed, repair cost unknown.
- Wage costs of having two trade-qualified employees rostered for 5 days to focus only on keeping the generator running.
- Employee overtime costs.
- CCTV system transformer caught fire due to a power surge (appendix #20).
- Kitchen freezer compressor failure from a power surge \$6000 replacement cost.
- Bar sub-board blew several switches from power surges, and the department lost trade for several hours. Repair cost unknown.
- Motor on the front automatic door burnt out from power surges, \$10,000 replacement cost.
- The Projector Air Cooling system at the Cinema burnt out from power surges; \$6000 replacement cost, unable to operate the cinema until replaced.

3.0. The Effectiveness of Providers' Communication Strategies Regarding Electricity Outages and Responses:

Transgrid communication strategies were poor at best and life-threatening at worst. Local State Government power provider Essential Energy did most of the communication, with Transgrid's communication improving once the situation had deteriorated and the media and government had become involved.

Essential Energy provided information about how load shedding worked (appendix #21), provided information on the backup generator status, expected reconnection times, text messages to residents and daily radio interviews.

Outside of the local ABC broadcasts, all the information provided was provided through social media and mobile phone text messages, which during the prolonged outages was useless as the mobile cell towers had failed and residents could not access any telecommunications. During the outages, I was emailing the Wilcannia Golf Club with up-to-date information (appendix #15&17), as communications in the outlying committees was even worse.

Further, there was no consideration for residents of the Far West who did not have access to a mobile phone, computer or social media. These residents had to rely upon family members for information, and if family members lived outside of Broken Hill, they were unable to contact them due to the telecommunication network failure. This resulted in calls to local police from family members living outside of the region for welfare checks on loved ones (appendix #10).

A collection of screenshots of the provider's communications is noted in Appendix #24.

4.0. Other related matters:

4.1. Telstra Mobile Phone Outages:

After only a few hours, the cell towers across the Far West started to fail due to low backup power. Telstra regional general manager Michael Morom told ABC Broken Hill that generators were pulled back once the backup gas turbine had restored power after the initial storm on the 16th of October 2024 (appendix #18). Telstra believed it had continuing power (Lim & Brown 2024).

The unreliability of mobile phone communications is an ongoing issue in the Far West, with any power outage over a few hours resulting in cell towers failing and residents being unable to call triple 0. Failure of the mobile phone network was seen during the November 2023 outage (Conner 2023), and Menindee during the 2019 outages (Volkofsky 2019).

It's not only Transgrid that needs to be held accountable but also Telstra for having poor emergency backup power at cell tower sites. The battery system used at cell tower sites in the Far West is just not good enough for such a remote area, and all levels of Government need to intervene and force Telstra to install proper redundancy because it's only a matter of time before someone dies because a triple 0 call could not be made.

5.0. Recommendations:

The Broken Hill Musicians Club makes the following recommendations to the enquiry.

- Local Registered Clubs that operate as community hubs during local emergencies, whether they are officially recognised or become that way organically, are included in communications from local authorities, and ClubsNSW is copied in on that communication on request.
- A delegate from the local Registered Club Industry is appointed on all Regional Emergency Management Committees, and the name and contact details of that delegate are provided to ClubsNSW so they have one point of contact during an emergency.
- Clubs operating as community hubs during emergencies are added to priority lists for support and assistance. For example, clubs should be on the priority list for generator fuel deliveries.
- ClubGRNATS guidelines are updated to allow Registered Clubs to make a deduction through Category 2 funding for equipment maintenance, such as generators that are used while the club is operating as a community hub during an emergency.
- ClubGRANTS guidelines are updated to allow Registered Clubs operating as community hubs to make a deduction through Category 2 funding for the costs of fuel for emergency generators.
- The NSW Government, Transgrid and Essential Energy enter into an MOU with local mining operations so that a formal agreement can be made to take renewable energy from the grid during times of high renewable energy generation when Line X2 is unavailable, thus protecting the backup diesel turbines which integrates with renewables poorly.
- Telstra is forced to install larger diesel generators at all cell tower sites, and an employee is tasked with monitoring fuel levels during any power outage so that the situation of not being able to call triple 0 calls is never repeated.
- An MOU is entered into with local charities and community groups to provide communication to residents without access to social media and the internet, so those people are aware of what is happening in a widespread local emergency situation.
- The backup gas turbines at the Transgrid Broken Hill substation are upgraded or replaced so that renewable energy will not cause them to fail.
- A second 220kV transmission line is built. This will not only build redundancy into the power supply of the Far West but will also open further renewable energy projects (Transgrid 2022) that are currently limited due to the capacity of Line X2. The line to be funded through the renewable energy investments and the current network connection fees, residents of the Far West should not have to pay extra for the basic right of reliable power.
- Stop Transgrid from selling or leasing the operation of the backup gas turbines to a third party (appendix #23).

6.0. Conclusion:

Thank you for taking the time to read the submission, and should you wish to discuss this further, please contact Michael Boland at any time on, 0419 563 881.

7.0 References:

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8.0 Appendix:

Appendix #1 Notice of Use of Gas Turbines November 2023 (Barrier Truth 2023):

Two large gas turbines (generators) will be used to supply power to Broken Hill and the nearby towns of Menindee, Sunset Strip, Wilcannia, White Cliffs, Tibooburra, and surrounding rural areas on Saturday, November 4 and Sunday, November 5.


The work – to be carried out by Transgrid – will take place on the transmission lines in and around Buronga, impacting the power supply to Broken Hill, as power is fed into the area from the high voltage lines that travel through Buronga.

Essential Energy does not anticipate any interruption to the power supply as a result of the turbines on the weekend, however remind residents to have power contingency plans in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances that result in power failure.

Support the Barrier Truth!

We are a small, independently owned newspaper. If you got something from this article, giving something back helps us to continue publishing the truth from the Broken Hill region. Every little bit counts.


Appendix #2 Fault of one of the two Gas Turbines November 2023 (Barrier Truth 2023):

**Barrier Truth**
6 November 2023 · 🌐




⚡🌧 Yesterday, a generator fault at 10:30 am left Broken Hill and nearby areas without power for up to 12 hours, turning Sunday routines upside down. Some residents kept cool in pools while others vowed to be better prepped next time! How did you spend the powerless hours?

Read more about the outage here ➡ <https://barriertruth.com.au/outage-overshadows-sunday/>


#PowerOutage #BrokenHill #CommunityUpdate #StayPrepared 💡🚧



BARRIERTRUTH.COM.AU


Outage overshadows Sunday - Barrier Truth
Generator fault plunged Broken Hill into darkness, with power outages spanning 12 hours for ...

 6




15 comments 1 share


 Like

 Comment

 Share

Appendix #3: Notice of Power Outage from Failure of One Turbine (5 November 2023).

 **ABC Broken Hill** 
5 November 2023 · 

 6:20pm update


Essential Energy are currently conserving power in areas of Broken Hill.


Full power may be returned around 9pm tonight.

Two large gas turbines (generators) which were to be used to supply power to Broken Hill and surrounding towns have failed.




The two 25 megawatt (MW) generators, which are operated by Transgrid, were to provide a continuous power supply for the area while maintenance works were to take place, from Saturday, 4 November to Sunday, 5 November.


[Essential Energy](#) and Transgrid are working to fix the problem so power can be restored to the city and surrounding communities.

 Listen to ABC Broken Hill: <https://ab.co/3kINfl2>


 For more local stories, sign up to our newsletter: <https://ab.co/2XNLOSw>

Appendix #4: Notice of Power Restoration to Main Transmission Line (5 November 2023).

 **ABC Broken Hill** 
5 November 2023 · 

 10:30pm update


Transgrid has confirmed the permanent line has now been restored to service.


 Update on power outages affecting the far west.

Some Essential Energy customers in the Broken Hill region are facing unplanned power outages this evening following the failure of a gas turbine temporarily providing power to the region.


The turbine is one of two providing power to the region while work is carried out by Transgrid – the operator and manager of the state's high voltage electricity transmission network. The unplanned power outage currently being experienced by some customers is required to manage demand on the network.

The main power supply to Broken Hill and surrounds is expected to resume by 9.00pm (CDST) on Sunday evening (5 November 2023), which will restore power to all customers.

 Listen to ABC Broken Hill: <https://ab.co/3kINfl2>

 For more local stories, sign up to our newsletter: <https://ab.co/2XNLOSw>

Appendix #5: Notice of Loss of Power from Main Transmission Line (25 July 2022).



ABC Broken Hill ✓
25 July 2022 · 🌐

7.15am update

Power has now been restored to all locations affected.

Essential Energy crews are currently investigating a large power outage affecting over 12,000 customers in Broken Hill and surrounds.

Power was lost around 1am, with some areas seeing power return at 4.30am this morning.

Appendix #6: Notice of Outage of Power from Main Transmission Line (2 October 2019).

POWER OUTAGE

UPDATE - 9am (Thursday 3rd October)

Broken Hill, Menindee, Wilcannia, White Cliffs, Sunset Strip, Tibooburra and surrounding areas

Overnight one of the two generators supplying power to the wider Broken Hill area had to be switched off to prevent lengthy unplanned power outages for a large number of customers.


As a result, customers in the area maybe, or may, experience an unplanned power outage.

Crews continue to work to bring the second generator back online as quickly as safety allows.

In addition, work continues to restore power to the wider Broken Hill area through the main powerline which normally supplies power to the area.

Essential Energy says that power should be restored around 10.30am cst.

Appendix #7: Notice of Outage of Power from Main Transmission Line (28 August 2019).



ABC Broken Hill ✓
28 August 2019 · 🌐

✗ POWER OUTAGE ✗

STATEMENT FROM ESSENTIAL ENERGY - 9.21AM

Essential Energy crews were kept busy on Wednesday after an unplanned power outage affected more than 12,500 homes and businesses in Broken Hill, Menindee, Sunset Strip, Tibooburra, Wilcannia, White Cliffs and surrounding areas.

Operations manager North Western, Damian Smith, said the unplanned power outage affected around 12,500 customers 7.07am (CST).

"Our control centre and local crews responded immediately and determined that Essential Energy had no power supply from the NSW high voltage electricity network," Damian said.

The Essential Energy network in the Far West is supplied power by a high voltage powerline between Buronga and Broken Hill which is operated by TransGrid, the operator and manager of the high voltage electricity network in NSW.

"Essential Energy worked closely with TransGrid and power was progressively restored to 6,114 customers at approximately 7.45am (CST), 3,189 between 7.55am and 8.03am, 109 at 8.16am and the remaining 3,199 customers between 8.21am and 8.34am," Damian said.

"We apologise for any inconvenience caused and thank customers for their patience while crews worked as quickly as safety allowed to restore power."




UPDATE - 8.19am

Power has started to return to areas of Broken Hill. Wilcannia and Menindee have had their power fully restored.

Broken Hill, Silverton and Wilcannia residents are reporting wide spread power outages across the city, which are estimated to be affecting roughly 12-thousand customers.

Electricity provider **Essential Energy** says staff are assessing the situation.

Appendix #8: Notice of Outage of Power from Main Transmission Line (17 May 2019).

 **ABC Broken Hill** 
17 May 2019 · 

UPDATE 1:50PM - Power has been restored to all properties.

EARLIER TODAY:


Essential Energy says more than 12,000 homes and businesses are without power around the far west.


The outage is affecting Broken Hill, Menindee, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Wilcannia and surrounding areas.

Essential says it's working with TransGrid, the operator of the electricity network, to restore power as soon as possible.

The local Perilya and CBH mines have also had to halt operations.

Appendix #9: Message Regarding Back-up Generator Units.



From 

Just talking doomsday with 

He reckons BH people don't realize how close they are to catastrophe
There's no backup turbine as the other one is being repaired in Melbourne, & they are fairly unreliable

So mate. Fill up the car & get the van ready just in case 😊

Appendix #10: Community Social Media Post.

when the power is out in Broken Hill the landline and mobile networks are dead.Had the Police visit because family could not get in touch with me.The police said they are busy doing checks on people as they are the only people that can be contacted.Please explain Telstra why this situation has occured and what you are doing to make sure it does not happen again?

13w Like Reply

Appendix #11: Message for help during a power outage.

Michael, [REDACTED] is in trouble with his CPAT machines. Could you please call him on ([REDACTED] as requested my phone number is [REDACTED] and advise him of his options. Appreciate a recognition when you read this. 🙏

I'll make a few calls and him

Thanks Michael, guess it is difficult for some people.

It would be for [REDACTED] I could imagine they are import machines for him

👍

Shorted

Thank you

21/10/2024, 19:27

[REDACTED] is calling [REDACTED] to make sure everything is shorted

Sorted

Dam autocorrect

⋮ ↩ 😊 Shorted is the wrong word to be using tonight

Did notice the typo but missed the lighter side. 😊

21/10/2024, 20:11

[REDACTED] is bringing [REDACTED] a generator for tonigut.

Appendix #12: Community Social Media Post.

7:50

Broken Hill Group

46m ·

The last few days have been a roller coaster of emotions, anger, lies, finger pointing, blame games, and now confusion.

Since the storm the other night that blew the electricity towers down, we have been fed what many believe are lies from those who are supposed to be running various organisations.

Most of us have been receiving updates that told us nothing useful. Very vague text messages.

We pay enough for our basic services, especially electricity, yet we are forced to live like third world citizens and live with no power while our food spoils, have no hot water to shower and bath, have no lights to sit and relax, no electricity to run stoves or ovens, we even had to find alternate ways to make our coffee. And that's only part of what the community has been forced to endure.

Then the power comes on, and the generator is "tripped" which in electrical terms should mean that a safety switch has tripped because of a fault or overload. Most of us have heard that it was far more serious than that.

Then the authorities start investigating as to the cause. We heard that so many times.

The cause as many believe is mismanagement and lack of servicing of vital infrastructure that is there to get us through events like we are currently enduring. Yes the storm was a natural disaster, the lack of maintenance is a man problem.

As was said in an earlier post, I bet the bosses of these providers didn't spend the last couple of nights sitting in the dark trying to get their heads around the problem the residents of numerous outback communities were enduring. Ahhh we will fix it in the morning.

The services to the outback, the condition of our infrastructure, and the lack of transparency and updates that actually tell us the truth need to be addressed.

We are a tough bunch out here in the bush, and we will get through this.

But the cost to us, our businesses, and the community, not to mention our mental health, far outweigh the damage to the towers.

I bet Transgrid, and essential energy don't offer to waive bills to allow us to put food back in our fridges and freezers.

They will have their fingers out for money at the next cycle of bills.

It's time for these companies to be proactive and not reactive. Don't wait for the problem to occur before they decide to maintain things.

As for confusion, no one knows how long we will even have power for the day or night. But most of us are prepared for these rolling power outages now.

Stand together, stand strong, we will get through this, how long or at what cost, who knows.

Appendix #13: ClubsNSW Support Email 1.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at 17:22:46 Australian Central Daylight Time

Subject: Update - Diesel Storage
Date: Tuesday 22 October 2024 at 3:35:06 pm Australian Central Daylight Time
From: [REDACTED]
To: Michael Boland
Attachments: image843644.jpg, image969463.png, image236986.png, image572064.png, image465123.png, image909166.jpg

Hi Michael,

I have sent you a text, but realised it might be intermittent service for you.

I believe [REDACTED] from Coomealla may have reached out to you directly, but he has arranged for the storage containers to be delivered to you and is expecting that to arrive around 8 am tomorrow morning.

I'll touch base with you in the morning but once we have confirmed the arrival to you, I can arrange transport of any spares over to [REDACTED] at Wilcannia.

I'll have access to my phone and email all night so feel free to send me anything else you might need.

[REDACTED]
ClubASSIST Team Leader
T: 02 9268 3018
E: [REDACTED]



The Registered Clubs Association of NSW
Level 8, 51 Druitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
P +61 2 9268 3000
www.clubsnsw.com.au



Appendix #14: ClubsNSW Support Email 2.

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Deteriorating Situation

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm currently working on my laptop at home using a battery generator to power my NBN as I have been without power since 5pm and mobile service since 8pm last night.

Basically the situation is deteriorating in Broken Hill and Far West, after having no power from 6:30pm Sunday night (I was on to 11pm, one of the lucky ones) to 9am yesterday morning the generator then overheated and caught fire yesterday afternoon at 5pm, the entire Far West has been with out power since.

The entire Far West could be without power until Saturday if not longer, I was at the club at 4am this morning with the maintenance team trying to keep out generators up and running, but due to the demand on the club we are going a lot more diesel than normal and with out the team we would have been in the dark by 8am this morning.

I urgently need a regular bulk supply of diesel to the club to allow us to keep serving Broken Hill, last we did 500 meals and had 600 plus people in the club enjoying a cold drink and the air cooler.

Is there anyway that your contacts in Sydney could get on a truck to Broken Hill asap 20, 44 gallon drums on diesel to be delivered to the club.

Many thanks,

Michael.

Looping in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I've just tried to call you to allocate a Club Assist person to run point on logistics for Michael. Call when free and we can work out how best to do that.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)



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www.clubsnsw.com.au



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2024 7:23:45 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Deteriorating Situation

Morning Michael,

That's not sounding good! I'm jumping on a plane shortly.

Some info below for an updated ClubLIFE article - be good to get it in today's media report with a call out for assistance?

[REDACTED] - FYI.

Talk soon!

[REDACTED]

Appendix #15: Email Communication to Wilcannia.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Michael Boland](#)
Subject: RE: Storms, power and the club
Date: Thursday, 17 October 2024 5:44:21 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Good evening Michael

Thanks you for your thoughtfulness and offer, at this stage everything is ok.

Club is running on our generator, just working on keeping up the fuel. Fortunately our security system came back on line, there was a lightning strike right near town the day before, caused it to have hiccups.

Lots of people coming in to recharge their phones.

Shop, shire, BP and Post Office all have generators. A day is usually manageable but this looks like being a long session. S [REDACTED] son dropped in this afternoon, said could be 2 weeks. Is that what you have heard?

Will keep in touch,

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

From: Michael Boland <michaelb@musiciansclub.com.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 October 2024 4:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Storms, power and the club

Hi [REDACTED]

Hopefully, this email gets through with the lack of phone service currently due to the power outages.

Just emailing to check to see how everyone is going up there with no power and the storms, hope the club and the community are safe.

If you any assistance with anything, just let me know, if you need anything taken up from Broken Hill, I am heading up your way over the weekend.

If you need anything give me a call any time on 0419 563 881.

Many thanks,

Michael.

Appendix #16: ClubsNSW Support Email 3.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Michael Boland](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Wilcannia Golf Club - [REDACTED]
Date: Tuesday, 22 October 2024 11:37:08 AM
Attachments: [image863755.png](#)
[image918567.png](#)
[image246091.png](#)
[image639392.png](#)

Hi Michael,

Thanks for your time on the phone.

I have just spoken with [REDACTED] out at Wilcannia, and the current situation is:

- The water supply is inconsistent.
- They are currently running their generator with diesel supplied by the service station.
- They have 1 x 44-gallon drum which is currently being regularly filled by their maintenance team.
- They are expecting a supply of pies and sausage rolls today.
- They are expecting a delivery of 1 pallet of water today.

In the short term their main requirements are:

- Additional fresh water supply.
- Looking to secure an additional 44-gallon drum to provide backup to their generator.

Regarding the bottled water, The team has liaised with Coca Cola who have generously donated 1 x Pallet of water to be delivered to the Broken Hill Musicians Club with an ETA of Thursday. I will work with [REDACTED] to see if we are able to secure something similar for Wilcannia and will update [REDACTED] I have further information.

From our call earlier I understand you were in the process of securing a diesel supply and additional spare drums for Broken Hill, please let me know if I can help co-ordinate any of this for you.

The team has also advised they are able to work with Corporate Partners and other suppliers if there are any food supplies you need. At this stage, would there be anything specific the clubs require?

The team will also touch base with the other clubs in the area to see if there is any support they require.

Please let me know what support I can provide for you.

[REDACTED]
ClubASSIST Team Leader

Appendix #17: Email Communication to Wilcannia.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Michael Boland](#)
Subject: RE: Latest Update
Date: Sunday, 20 October 2024 6:08:10 PM

Again, thanks for the update

Everyone in town is prepared for a shutdown tonight, if it doesn't happen, so much the better.

Wilcannia's most pressing issue is the low potable water supply, but Shire seem to think it will be right by Wednesday

Kind regards




[REDACTED]

From: Michael Boland <michaelb@musiciansclub.com.au>
Sent: Sunday, 20 October 2024 4:10 PM
To: [REDACTED] u
Subject: Latest Update

Hi [REDACTED]

Latest update from the Regional Emergency Committee.

Appendix 18: Telstra Cell Towers Down:

 **ABC Broken Hill** 
22 October 2024 · 

Communications across the far west are down with telecommunication company Telstra sending more generators to the area to support the network.

"Unfortunately, obviously the situation in the last 12 hours has changed that and we're re-deploying some 20 generators at this stage," said Michael Marom, Regional General Manager for Telstra.

"Priority's given to those locations that have hospitals and other medical services."

"We hope to have services back up and running by the end of today".

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<https://ab.co/abcnewsapp>

Appendix 19: Club Industry Support – Storage Arrives.



Appendix #20: Musicians Club Power Supply Failure.



Appendix #21: Essential Energy Communication – Power Shedding.

**ABC Broken Hill** 
24 October 2024 · 

Far west residents are being told to expect to lose power with little warning for another fortnight, as the fallout from a storm that destroyed transmission infrastructure continues.

Customers across Broken Hill, Wilcannia, White Cliffs, Menindee and Tibooburra have been forced off grid at night as providers try to protect back-up generators from being overloaded.

Essential Energy operations manager Mark Summers says load shedding will continue until Transgrid gets temporary transmission towers installed on November 6.



ABC.NET.AU

What is load shedding and why is it happening in the Far West? - ABC listen
Essential Energy says it's difficult to warn people ahead of losing power, as they try to prot...

Appendix #22: Social Media Post 3.

12:14

5G

< [redacted] is with [redacted] and 2
[redacted] others in Broken Hill, NSW. ...
6h · 🌐

The evening improved, though, as after we conquered that ordeal, we enjoyed some drinks under air conditioning at the [Musicians Club](#) (which ran on a generator), and after that, we drove out of town to Mount Gipps ([Broken Hill Outback Resort](#)), which we knew also had power, to go and enjoy some steaks and a few more drinks to relieve the tension of the day and celebrate our wins. After returning home, we were all ready for a well-deserved rest—with no aircon after a 36°C day behind us and rewarded with somewhat stuffy sleep. But nobody complained while our new genny was humming in the background. We're counting our blessings—as the generator is keeping us powered, and we've been told power should be restored by Thursday for our area of town, as it forms part of the mine's reticulation.

It's been a colossal disaster—with most of the town's folks throwing out their fridge and freezer contents yesterday and leaving for Adelaide until next week. No wonder the fuel station was packed! [redacted] at Woolies sold out more than 160 grilled chickens in record time as people wanted hot food. Those chickens went directly from the oven into queuing people's hands, bypassing the shelves altogether. Altogether yesterday they sold 260 grilled chickens and a helluva-lot of cold meats too. Surrounding towns and cities, I've heard have sourced and sent more than a couple of hundred generators to Broken Hill to stock our village to provide an opportunity for local folk to get a generator to sustain some electricity in worse affected parts of town and over the next 2-3 weeks until the power is completely restored.



Write a comment...



Appendix #23: Transgrid Waiver to Operate Broken Hill Gas Turbine Facility

(<https://www.aer.gov.au/system/files/2024-02/Transgrid%20-%20PUBLIC%20Application%20for%20Waiver%20for%20Broken%20Hill%20Gas%20Turbines%20-%20January%202024.pdf>).

Attachment removed from this publication but publicly available at hyperlink above.

Appendix #24: Communications during outages.



ABC Broken Hill

17 October 2024 · 🌐

...

🕒 7.10am update

Emergency crews from [Transgrid](#) are working to safely restore power to the 220,000 Volt powerline supplying Broken Hill, following a large storm that passed through the area overnight.

Power will be restored to Broken Hill via backup diesel generators due to the damaged power lines. The generators will be used until the line can be fixed.

The fault is located outside Broken Hill and crews have been deployed to coordinate repairs.

Over 12,000 customers lost power at midnight.

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<https://ab.co/abcnewsapp>



Author

ABC Broken Hill

🕒 Monday Oct 21: After POWER CUTS from last night between 11 PM - 5 AM for back-up generator maintenance there have been delays bringing it all back online. Power will be restored progressively throughout the city and should be returned by 8.30am.



ABC Broken Hill

23 October 2024 · 🌐

...

Power has been progressively restored Broken Hill and surrounding communities after emergency repairs were completed to [Transgrid](#) back-up generator on Tuesday.

Extra generators have arrived in Broken Hill and the company along with [Essential Energy](#) will work to install the additional generators to supplement supply to all areas.

Repairs are being made to the powerline that was damaged, with earthworks complete, equipment on site and a 24-hour rotating shift to begin this morning.

If your power has not been restored, comment below. 📌

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<https://ab.co/abcnewsapp>

 [Transgrid](#)



Author

ABC Broken Hill ✓

Update from Essential Energy

To ensure the power system remains stable and to protect the generator providing power supply to Broken Hill & surrounds, Essential Energy have commenced periodic load cycling. You may experience interruptions to your supply over the next few hours.

13w Like Reply Edited



Author

ABC Broken Hill ✓

8:30pm update

Multiple power and telecommunications outages across the far west. In Wilcannia and surrounds the power situation has deteriorated. Essential Energy is adding additional generators to the system. Power is expected to be down for around the next two hours.

13w Like Reply

2



Author

ABC Broken Hill ✓

🕒 7.50am update

Essential Energy has been given all clear by Transgrid and will start restoring power to Broken Hill

13w Like Reply

11



ABC Broken Hill ✓

28 October 2024 · 🌐

...



9.50pm update - power has been restored

Essential Energy and Transgrid are investigating why the generators which power all communities outside of Broken Hill have tripped.

Crews are working to restore power.

At this stage they do not know when power will be restored.

Choose your news on the ABC NEWS app and stay in the know: <https://ab.co/abcnewsapp>

Text Message
Today 6:41 PM

ESSENTIAL ENERGY UPDATE To ensure the power system remains stable and to protect the generator providing power supply to Broken Hill & surrounds, we have commenced periodic load cycling. You may experience interruptions to your supply. We apologise for the inconvenience and if you are impacted, we will restore your supply as soon as possible.

Text Message
Today 11:51 AM

ESSENTIAL ENERGY REMINDER DURING THE DAY, POWER AWAY - It is important that your power use from sunrise to 5.30pm (ACDT) remains the same as normal to avoid an oversupply of rooftop solar generation making it harder to keep the power system operating.

Essential Energy advise that we are aware of an outage at your address. This outage is impacting 9379 customers in the BROKEN HILL REGION & SURROUNDING AREAS. To keep up to date with this outage please head to our website <https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/outages-and-faults/power-outages> . Crews are investigation the fault. We will provide you with another update as we progress. We appreciate your patience while crews work to safely restore your power supply. Thank-you, Essential Energy