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Innovative approach ensures no falls in Creek repair

SP AusNet maintains Falls Creek's power supply in steep terrain

Extraordinary and innovative measures have been used in the steep alpine terrain to complete electricity maintenance by SP AusNet, the electricity distributor for Falls Creek.

SP AusNet spokesperson Sean Sampson said the work had been completed on bushfire affected trees following the 2003 and 2006 Victorian Alpine Fires.

"Late last year, the electricity supply to Falls Creek was threatened when a fire-affected tree fell across the servicing powerline," he said.

"While we were able to fix the powerline at the time and restore power to the area, it was only a temporary solution because of the steep terrain and access issues for our crews.

"With thousands of trees affected by the 2003 and 2006 bushfires that ravaged the National Park, we've been monitoring the situation closely and working on a custom-designed way to fix the powerline that was damaged.

"Our crews developed a plan to repair the line, while maintaining the highest standards of safety," he said.

Not only was the steep terrain a concern to the power company, but so too was the ongoing threat of falling trees that had suffered similar fire damage.

SP AusNet began working with Parks Victoria in December 2009 to remove dead and decaying trees in the vicinity of the powerline between Mount Beauty and Falls Creek.

SP AusNet and parks Victoria also negotiated and managed the installation of tracks into the location of these powerpoles to enable future repairs.

Mr Sampson said the power company was able to begin replacing powerpoles and powerlines in April this year, through the use of large cranes, extensive use of earth moving equipment and a lot of careful planning.

"The overriding concern was the safety of the people working on the project," he said.

"This focus was maintained throughout the project and when the final aspect of the job was completed, the crew was able to walk away without recording a single injury or incident, which is a great result.

"The repair work has now been completed, which means safe and reliable electricity supply to the Falls Creek area, now and in the lead up to the coming snow season," he said.

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