

29 June 2016

Helicopter powerline inspections across Gippsland

AusNet Services will be doing low-flying helicopter inspections of high voltage electricity lines across Gippsland during July, as part of the company's maintenance and bushfire mitigation programs.

Helicopter inspections allow the business to assess a large volume of electricity assets in challenging terrains and diverse landscapes across its electricity network, which services 80,000 square kilometres of eastern Victoria.

In the week of 4-8 July, AusNet Services the helicopter will be inspecting the main backbone line between Bairnsdale and Mallacoota.

Then from 18-26 July, many of the high voltage spur lines running off the backbone line to communities including Chandler's Creek, Combienbar, Buchan, Bruthen, Swift's Creek and Omeo will be inspected.

AusNet Services' Regional Customer and Community Manager, Gareth Downes, said that aerial inspections help the company manage its 37-month inspection cycle of electricity assets in high bushfire risk areas.

"We're increasingly undertaking aerial inspections, using helicopters and drones, as they are both more effective, and more efficient. We also expect to undertake more patrols of other lines across Gippsland later during the year," he said.

"With the helicopter, we can quickly fly along our powerlines in challenging landscapes to photograph assets. Our technical specialist then assess them and direct our field workers to undertake any appropriate work that may be required," Mr Downes said.

"The helicopter inspections are a part of our extensive inspection and maintenance programs and also help ensure we are prepared for the coming bushfire season".

AusNet Services operates the helicopter between 10am and 3pm, flying with custom blades that minimise noise at approximately 100 feet. However there will be no low flying in built-up areas.

Planned flight schedule (may change due to weather conditions)

Date	Area
4-8 July	Bairnsdale - Newmerella – Cann River – Mallacoota
18-26 July	Chandler's Creek – Combienbar – Buchan – Bruthen - Swift's Creek - Omeo

Ends...