MEDIA RELEASE

BLACKOUT A REMINDER OF NEGLECT

Terry Mills MLA
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Last night’s explosion at the Casuarina sub-station shows the Government’s efforts to fix the Territory’s power facilities are failing.

Opposition Leader Terry Mills said 1500 Darwin households were affected by the blackout – which occurred while many families were preparing the evening meal and getting ready for the week ahead.

Almost two years since the Casuarina sub-station last melted down, this latest incident is a reminder of the Labor Government’s neglect of PowerWater’s infrastructure, ” Mr Mills said.

“Labor pocketed $80million in dividend payments from PowerWater instead of investing that money into improving the network – and Territorians are still paying for that neglect.

It’s been two years since Essential Services Minister Rob Knight told Territorians to buy generators if they wanted to guarantee their power supply.

The Government has created an expectation that it is sorting out the Territory’s power issues, when clearly it isn’t.

Last year, PowerWater claimed its long term action plan ‘ensures PowerWater has embedded the changes recommended in the Mervyn Davies Report and is increasingly well-placed to meet the Northern Territory’s growing and changing needs.’

This appears to be putting spin ahead of outcomes.

Darwin residents have a right to expect uninterrupted electricity. They also have a right to expect a decent explanation when the lights do go out.

This was sorely lacking in relation to last night’s black-out, with PowerWater stating the obvious when they said a metering device had ‘failed’.

Householders could work that out for themselves. What they need now is to be told why the Casuarina sub-station caught fire and what’s being done to stop it happening again.

It’s cold comfort PowerWater are trumpeting the fact power was restored within 90 minutes of crashing. In the middle of the Dry Season, it shouldn’t be crashing.”