

Broken Hill tower failures and power outages

Background

As a licensed electricity network operator, Transgrid has relevant regulatory obligations including under the *Electricity Supply Act 1995* (ES Act), *Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014* (Safety Regulation) and the reliability and performance standards within its [Licence](#).

During a severe storm on 16 October 2024, seven 220kV Transgrid transmission towers failed resulting in the interruption to supply to Broken Hill and surrounding areas.¹ Transgrid relies on two backup generators which are designed to provide supply to Broken Hill and surrounding areas in the event of the 220kV transmission line being unavailable. It is understood that one of the two generators was offline and the other generator was unable to supply the full load requirements, leaving customers without supply.

The circumstances of the incident and associated impact to supply to Broken Hill and surrounding areas warrants investigation.

The Tribunal has decided to undertake an investigation on whether Transgrid has breached relevant regulatory obligations in relation to the incident, including its licence conditions. These terms of reference set out the scope for this investigation.

Terms of reference

IPART will investigate:

1. Whether there has been a breach of regulatory obligations, including the *Electricity Supply Act 1995* (ES Act) and the *Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Act 2015* (Safety Regulation) and whether any breach is continuing.
2. Whether there has been a breach of Transgrid's licence, including:
 - a. condition 3 and appendix 2 concerning reliability and performance standards
 - b. condition 6 concerning the maintenance of certified management systems
 - c. condition 7 concerning the implementation of management systems
 - d. any other conditions relevant; andwhether any breach is continuing.
3. The circumstances of the failure of the Towers, including the asset management system compliance.
4. The circumstances of the backup generators, including the availability and asset management system compliance.
5. Any other matters considered relevant.

¹ Broken Hill and surrounding areas are supplied from the National Electricity Market via a single 220kV supply which originates at Buronga and extends for ~260km to Transgrid's Broken Hill bulk supply point.