



Beverage can found on tower conductor arm

WHAT HAPPENED?

On 16 July 2025, while scoping an access track for upcoming works, a Downer supervisor noticed an aluminium can on the upper insulator on BPE-ONG-AO433, a 110kV transmission tower in the remote Retaruke Valley area in behind Waimarino (National Park). An internal review determined that although there was no evidence indicating how the can was placed on the tower but the method used to secure (forced onto a bird deterrent) indicated that it is likely it was manually positioned and secured which suggests that a person climbed the tower to achieve this.

Due to the potential risk of falling from height, the incident has been classified as a Level 2 (potential for serious injury). The can remains in place due to the low risk of it falling and requires removal during the next planned outage in February 2026 or via live line techniques. The opening in the can is smaller than standard bird spikes, making removal challenging.

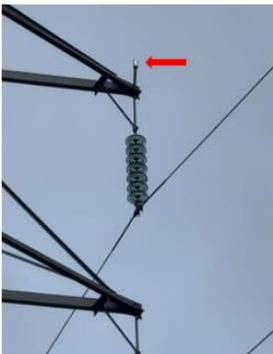


Image: Photo shows aluminium can (indicated with red arrow in left picture) placed on top of bird deterrent above the upper insulator of Tower 433. The height of the tower is 18m and the location of the can is on the upper conductor arm at approximately 16m from ground level.

Photos from a condition assessment undertaken in June 2023 and a line patrol conducted in 2024 confirm the can has been present on Tower 433 for a minimum of this timeframe. Its relatively small size, ability to visually blend in, and lack of impact on tower integrity may explain why it wasn't previously seen and/or reported. This presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen the consistency of our visual inspection and condition assessment processes. By reinforcing what to look for and encouraging proactive reporting, even for seemingly low-risk items, we can improve the quality and reliability of our inspections.

LEARNINGS

- Please report any defects you observe on towers, including unusual objects such as cans or items placed on insulator cross-arm bird deterrents.
- Reporting items like cans, objects placed on structures, or any signs of public activity around towers is important because it helps us maintain both public safety and the integrity of the transmission network. These observations also help us build an accurate picture of what's happening around each site. When we see changes in the footprint, such as disturbed ground, makeshift tracks, or objects placed on the structure, it can indicate increased public access or tampering. This information is crucial in assessing whether additional protective measures, like a Climb Deterrent Guard (CDG), may be needed.
- By reporting these signs early, patrollers and assessors help ensure we can intervene before risks escalate, strengthen controls where needed, and continue to keep both our people and the public safe and ensure the reliability of our transmission network.

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