BLAMING BATS FAILS MATARANKA

Willem Westra van Holthe MLA

Date 29th July 2010

Last night’s meeting between the Mataranka community and PowerWater representatives to resolve power supply issues in the town was disappointing.

Member for Katherine, Willem Westra van Holthe, said the meeting left residents with a sense they have been abandoned by Government and that PowerWater is looking in the wrong places to solve the problem.

“Mataranka experiences rolling blackouts almost every day and night, and has done so for years,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“Fruit bats generally sleep during the day, yet yesterday I was told there were three blackouts between 1.30pm and 5pm and daytime power failures are a regular occurrence.

The delays are seriously hurting the town.

The police station’s telephone network collapses when the power’s down, Jilkminggan school has had to close because of outages and computers, air-conditioners and petrol bowser’s in the town have blown-up.

The Mataranka clinic has been forced to replace three $5000 immunisation refrigerators, up to $5000 worth of medication and a $3000 anti-venom kit. Staff have been called out to nearby communities where patients on respirators have been placed in life-threatening situations by blackouts.

“Not only was Essential Services Minister Rob Knight a no-show, but local member Karl Hampton also didn’t bother to front.

Had they been there, they would have learnt first hand the serious nature of this issue and been able to relay the concerns of the community to Cabinet.

“I can only assume Rob Knight and Karl Hampton’s power isn’t crashing all hours of the day or night.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430