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CITIPOWER AND POWERCOR SUPPORT VICTORIAN COPPER THEFT INITIATIVE

CitiPower and Powercor, with fellow electricity distribution businesses and other organisations affected by copper theft, have today joined Crime Stoppers Victoria to launch of a national media and advertising campaign aimed at targeting the crime.

Copper theft is an illegal and extremely dangerous crime. It is also increasingly the cause of severe public inconvenience in Victoria, with impacts including disruptions to power supplies, compromised reliability of public transport and other public services.

The crime is rapidly becoming a global concern, with South Africa reporting deteriorating information and communication technology services and the United States reporting 20 deaths to 'would be' copper thieves from electrocution and falls in the last two years alone.

Since 2004, reported copper theft incidents in Victoria have risen by 465 per cent with the number of crimes committed increasing from 52 in 2004 to almost 500 last year.

"Copper theft causes disruption to public transport; shuts down telecommunications and slows down building construction. It is causing increasing inconvenience and is costing the community millions and millions of dollars," said Detective Senior Sergeant Val Smith of Victoria Police.

Detective Senior Sergeant Smith also warned copper thieves to take note that more often than not, the copper they are targeting has been protected with micro-dot technology. This means that stolen copper can now be traced, even after it has been melted down – leading police to copper thieves.

CitiPower and Powercor Corporate Affairs Manager Hugo Armstrong warned that thieves who attempted to steal copper from electrical systems were placing their lives at risk.

"Everyone knows copper theft is an illegal but when it comes to stealing it from high voltage electrical systems it's just utterly stupid," Mr Armstrong said.

"In Victoria we are yet to experience a death related to copper theft but if the crime continues the consequences will be tragic. We must never let that happen in our state," he said.

CitiPower and Powercor urge all Victorians to report any information related to the theft of copper or other metals by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or making reports online at www.crimestoppers.com.au

**Media inquiries: CitiPower and Powercor Australia's
24-hour media service on 9683 4342.**

MEDIA RELEASE