

Squirrel sparks fire at Wellington power plant, causes power outage for city

By Matt Riedl, November 10 2016, New Zealand

A squirrel got into the main breaker at the Wellington municipal power plant early Thursday afternoon, sparking a fire at the plant and causing widespread power outages in Wellington.

Wellington Mayor Shelley Hansel said crews are working to get the city switched to its backup gas turbine until the breaker at the plant can be replaced.

Hansel said squirrels are a “recurring problem” at the power plant.

“We have traps all over the power plant,” she said. “They crawl on our lines and they get down in there where the generators and the breakers and everything are.

“It sounds funny but it’s not, especially when it takes out an entire community.”

Power is expected to be restored to the Wellington area by 3 p.m., she said.