

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Solar Homes



Wednesday, 1 April 2020

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND KEEP YOUR LIGHTS ON

Households facing economic hardship because of the coronavirus are protected from having their gas or electricity disconnected, thanks to reforms put in place by the Victorian Government.

Under the changes, which started in 2019, energy retailers must provide assistance to any household that contacts them because they are having trouble paying their bills.

The assistance could include a payment plan, putting account payments on hold while customers work towards paying for their usage, or extending bill due dates.

Anyone receiving such assistance can't be disconnected while they are participating in the hardship plan – so it's vital that Victorians reach out to their retailers if they are struggling to pay their bills.

While we combat this health crisis, we know that for many Victorians and Victorian businesses it's an economic crisis as well.

That's why the Victorian Government also expects energy retailers to keep business customers under financial stress connected if they have raised their situation with their provider and to work with them on a manageable payment plan.

If businesses have temporarily ceased operations, the Government also expects retailers to waive disconnection and reconnection fees.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio**

*"No household can be disconnected if they are struggling to pay their bills, provided they've contacted their energy company – so it's vital people know their rights, reach out to their retailer and work out a plan."*

*"We've introduced the strongest protections for households in the country to protect Victorians doing it tough – protections that are particularly important right now, given the devastating impacts of coronavirus."*

*"Energy retailers should also do the right thing by Victorian businesses and help them get to the other side of this health and economic emergency."*