

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for the State Electricity Commission



Thursday, 9 November 2023

STRENGTHENING ELECTRICITY NETWORK RESILIENCE AND SAFETY

The Allan Labor Government is bolstering electricity resilience and safety to protect Victorians against power outages caused by extreme weather events.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio launched the Gembrook Energy Resilience System – part of a \$7.5 million Labor Government program that is a direct response to a key recommendation of the Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review.

The Review was commissioned by the Minister for Energy in response to two storms events in 2021, with an Expert Panel appointed to provide recommendations as to how the resilience of the network and the response to prolonged outages could be improved.

The Government supports the recommendations which include:

- Boosting network and community resilience
- Creating obligations for electricity distribution businesses to publish resilience plans
- Requesting a change to the National Electricity Rules to embed resilience in network planning
- Introducing new emergency management obligations.

The Energy Resilience Systems program will fund solar panels, batteries and backup generators at 23 community buildings located in areas at high-risk of storm or bushfire-related power outages. The community buildings will act as hubs for the local community, providing a space to cook meals, charge devices and find information.

Work is already underway at 19 sites with most expected to be complete ahead of the summer bushfire season. The systems will also provide the ongoing benefit of providing cheap renewable energy to community buildings year-round.

The Government has also enhanced community resilience through an update to the *Energy Legislation Amendment (Electricity Outage Emergency Response and Other Matters) Act 2023* that requires electricity distribution businesses to provide real time updates during an emergency and support relief programs.

The state's electricity network resilience has also been strengthened through the *Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023*, which includes updating insulation standards for low voltage lines in high bushfire risk areas to ensure they are safer.

Since the Black Saturday Bushfires, the Government has invested more than \$1 billion in powerline bushfire safety.

Implementing the supported recommendations will mean electricity distribution businesses are more proactive when responding to damage to their networks caused by extreme weather and that Victoria is better prepared for storms and severe weather events in the future.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio

"We support the review recommendations and have started the work to deliver them - ensuring that our energy network is better equipped to handle extreme weather events, which are becoming more frequent due to climate change."

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“We’re improving the resilience of electricity infrastructure to provide communities with access to a secure power supply during emergency situations.”

Quote attributable to Member for Monbulk Daniela De Martino

“We know how important having access to power for simple necessities like hot showers and phone charging can be during an emergency situation and this new energy resilience system will ensure the Gembrook community have somewhere safe they can go to during severe storms.”