

SUPPORT FOR BUSHFIRE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES AND CUSTOMERS



The recent bushfires have caused extensive damage, including to the electricity network. In total around 1,000km of powerlines were affected with 7,500 customers off supply as a result of the damage.

Our crews have worked tirelessly to reconnect the vast majority of customers safely, but there are a small number of customers who remain off supply, as there is still limited or no access to their areas due to ongoing fire activity or other safety issues.

We have made efforts to contact all of these customers to provide special assistance where this is possible. If you remain without power and have not been contacted by one of our customer support team please call our dedicated customer support line on 1300 561 171.

Financial assistance

AusNet Services will waive all fees associated with reconnecting supply. These fees vary in cost from \$225 to \$894 for an overhead connection or between \$2,500 to \$5,000 for an underground connection.

We will waive the Network Standing charge, up to \$130, for all customers who have been off supply for more than 7 consecutive days. We will either do this directly or through electricity retailers, whichever provides the best outcome for the customer.

To assist customers, **AusNet Services will fast track payments under the Victorian Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) scheme.** Most customers whose supply has been impacted by the bushfires will be eligible for a payment of up to \$360 under this scheme.

For more information about financial assistance visit our website www.AusNetServices.com.au

Ongoing assistance and support

We've set up a Customer Bushfire Support line for our customers affected by the bushfires across the state. Please call **1300 561 171** from 8am to 8pm AEDT Monday to Sunday.

For up to date information on outages and restoration times in bushfire affected AusNet Services areas go to www.OutageTracker.com.au and www.AusNetServices.com.au/BushfireSupport

Keep an eye out on AusNet Services' Facebook page and the media for community updates.

We will continue sending our teams to community meetings to answer questions and support local on ground emergency operations. If you have a community meeting you would like AusNet Services to attend, please call our Customer Bushfire Support line to let us know about it.

FAQs for communities affected by the Victorian bushfires

What needs to happen to get the power back on in my community?

Before we can restore power to communities impacted by the bushfires, we need safe access to assess the damage. Access times will vary depending on local conditions. Where possible, we have been flying our helicopters over these areas to assess our network before we gain access by roads.

It is important to note that damage is not always visible and all of our networks need inspecting before we can restore power.

What if my outage is estimated to be long term?

If you are likely to be off mains power supply for three weeks or more, an AusNet Services representative will have made contact with you. This will mean your connection has been severely damaged or the area is not yet accessible. We are still working to reconnect you as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, you can access temporary generator units that can supply limited power to your home.

What happens if there is damage to my electricity connection/premise?

Restoration of bushfire impacted communities is our priority.

If damage is identified we may need to remove the main service fuse as operating damaged equipment may cause further damage or serious injury.

We will leave a letter at your property advising you of this. If you receive one, contact a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) to check the integrity of the connection and carry out repairs before power can be restored. The REC must provide you with a Certificate of Electrical Safety (COES) following assessment and repair of any problem.

Once repairs have been completed the REC should contact the Customer Bushfire Support Line on **1300 561 171** or our Faults Line on **131 799** outside of these hours, to arrange for your power to be turned back on.

Further information on REC requirements and COES is on the Energy Safe Victoria website:

www.esv.vic.gov.au

Whom should I call to arrange the restoration of my electricity supply?

If there is no damage to your premise or it has been repaired, call 131 799.

What do I do if I have solar panels?

If you are being supplied by a generator you may be asked to switch off your solar until main power is restored as the solar output can damage the temporary generators. We will get in contact with you if this is required.

Can I use my generator?

For information on the safe use of a private generator during a power outage, go to Energy Safe Victoria's 'Bushfire Safety Advice' website:

www.esv.vic.gov.au/safety-education/bushfire-and-powerline-safety/bushfire-safety-advice//

Can I access Government relief funding?

If you have been adversely affected by the bushfires in Victoria, visit the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment website or call the Department of Health and Human Services on **180 22 66**.

www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment

Electrical safety

If you are concerned about electrical safety you can find out more information on Energy Safe Victoria's website.

www.esv.vic.gov.au/safety-education/bushfire-and-powerline-safety/bushfire-safety-advice//

Before digging on your property it is very important you check for any underground infrastructure to avoid accidents or damage.

To do this, please contact the 'Dial before you dig'.

Phone number: **1100**

Website: www.1100.com.au



Do not approach damaged or fallen powerlines as they may be live. If you're experiencing a power fault or emergency or see a powerline down please call our 24-hour Faults and Emergencies line on 131 799.