

The background of the cover is a large aerial photograph of a dense forest. A series of power lines with wooden poles run diagonally from the upper left towards the lower right. The forest canopy is a mix of dark green and bright yellow-green, suggesting different tree species or seasonal changes. The sky is a clear, bright blue. On the right side, there are several overlapping geometric shapes: a large white triangle pointing downwards, a smaller black triangle pointing upwards, and a magenta triangle pointing downwards. These shapes partially obscure the forest image.

Victorian Government Response to the Expert Panel's Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review



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Foreword



Many Victorians were devastated by prolonged power outages caused by severe storms in June and October 2021. This was a difficult time for people, many of whom were without power for days and even weeks.

I was inspired by the resilience shown by impacted communities in the face of such hardships. I was also encouraged to see communities, councils, electricity businesses, and government working together to respond to both storms.

Climate change is here, and it will make storms more frequent and intense, and the threat to our electricity distribution network will only increase. We need to improve the resilience of electricity infrastructure and be better prepared to mitigate the effects of long duration outages.

The Victorian Government thanks the Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review Expert Panel for examining this matter. The Expert Panel, consisting of Jo Benvenuti (Chair), Claire Noone, and Mark Paterson, have examined how electricity distribution network businesses could improve their preparedness and response to prolonged power outages arising from storms and other extreme weather events.

The Expert Panel conducted extensive stakeholder engagement in April 2022, including cross-sector forums and meetings with individual stakeholders and surveyed community members and businesses from affected areas. This engagement culminated in a detailed final report with a comprehensive package of recommendations to the government.

The government thanks all Victorians who spent time and effort to participate in the Expert Panel's review and in many cases shared their personal stories about the hardships they faced. Your stories have helped shape the government's response. The government also acknowledges the experience of communities who faced electricity outages after the publication of the Expert Panel's report, including in the floods of October 2022.

The government supports in full, in part, or in principle the vast majority of the recommendations made by the Expert Panel. This report details the government's position on each of the recommendations, and the next steps we will take.

Our strong support for the Panel's recommendations shows our commitment to helping Victorians be better prepared for future storms and other extreme weather events.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lily D'Ambrosio'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'L' and 'D'.

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy and Resources

Introduction

The Victorian Government is pleased to set out its formal response to the Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review (the Review).

The Review examined how electricity distribution businesses can improve their preparedness for and response to prolonged power outages arising from extreme weather events. This Review was conducted in response to the severe storms in June and October 2021, which caused prolonged power outages and had devastating impacts on Victorian communities. The Review considered measures to strengthen community resilience in the face of prolonged power outages, as climate change is likely to increase both the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in the coming years.

The Review was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was undertaken between September to October 2021 and resulted in a final report that made eight recommendations to be implemented by the summer of 2021-22. These recommendations centred around improvements to communication with critical infrastructure operators, enhanced public messaging to support community preparedness, and faster support for power-dependent customers.

An Expert Panel (the Panel) was appointed to lead Phase 2 of the Review to advise the Government on how the electricity distribution businesses can help reduce the likelihood and impact of prolonged power outages, to help build community resilience. The Panel members were Jo Benvenuti (Chair), Claire Noone and Mark Paterson.

The Panel consulted extensively and developed a comprehensive package of recommendations for immediate, medium, and longer-term reforms, delivering its final report to the Minister for Energy and Resources in May 2022. The focus of the Panel's considerations is the significant role of electricity distribution businesses in building resilience to extreme weather events. The Panel identified reform measures, policies and regulatory changes designed to ensure that electricity distribution businesses can undertake work to mitigate the risk of, and better respond to, prolonged power outages.

The government supports in full, in part, or in principle the vast majority of the Panel's recommendations and has in some cases already made progress on the most urgent reforms. This report explains why and notes the next steps we will take to implement the remaining reforms.

Recognising the urgency of the need for more resilient electricity networks in the face of increasing severe weather events and place a greater reliance on the electricity distribution network as we move towards increased electrification in an effort to decarbonise, the Victorian Government has taken steps to identify the highest risk areas of the state through the Energy Resilience Solutions program, and invested \$8.1 million in the first tranche of projects to improve community resilience, as outlined further below.

On 1 June 2023 Parliament passed the *Energy Legislation Amendment (Electricity Outage Emergency Response and Other Matters) Act 2023* that amended the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* to empower the Secretary of the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA) (or delegate) to direct electricity distribution businesses to assist with relief programs and to process Victorian Government relief payments.

In the three-yearly review of the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) – Energy Sub-Plan this year, amendments were made to formalise the role of electricity distribution businesses coordinating relief during emergency situations. This included inserting a responsibility for electricity distribution businesses to ensure affected customers receive support payments for future prolonged power outages caused by extreme weather events, such as the Prolonged Power Outage Payments.

The implementation of some of the remaining recommendations which are supported in this Victorian Government Response require a significant program of policy and regulatory analysis, including consultation, to finalise and put into place, and this is likely to take some years. This includes taking a whole-of-government approach and engaging with the community in the decision-making process.

Government Response to the Expert Panel's recommendations

OUTLINE OF THE EXPERT PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Reduce the likelihood of prolonged power outages

Recommendation 1: Immediate reforms to drive investment in the current regulatory period

1.1	Identify high-risk locations	Support in principle and implemented
1.2	Conduct geospatial analysis (Prolonged Power Outage Risk Assessments (PPORA))	
1.3	Support local councils to identify the needs of community hubs	
1.4	Identify range of potential investments	
1.5	Identify preferred investment solution(s)	
1.6	Conduct cost-benefit analysis and identify investment sources	
1.7	Introduce new regulatory obligations to invest	

Recommendation 2: Medium term, enduring reform to embed resilience investments in the Victorian regulatory framework

2.1	Develop 5-yearly Network Resilience Plans	Support in full
2.2	Incorporate and refresh the PPORA	Support in principle
2.3	Submit plan, comply with regulatory requirements	Support in full

Recommendation 3: Longer term reforms to embed resilience investments in the national regulatory framework

3.1	Assess willingness to pay	Support in full
3.2	Account for resilience as a capital expenditure objective	
3.3	Introduce a new regulatory mechanism to drive resilience	Not Support

Reduce the impact of prolonged power outages

Recommendation 4: Partnering with communities and local councils in emergency planning and response

4.1	Electricity distribution businesses to support municipal and regional emergency planning by	
4.1.1	Providing their PPORA to the relevant Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs) and Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees (REMPCs)	Support in full
4.1.2	Seeking MEMPC and REMPC input on how to best tailor potential investment solutions at each high-risk location	
4.1.3	Provide input and support to the business continuity plans for relief centres and community hubs at each high-risk location	
4.2	Electricity distribution businesses to provide support to emergency response:	
4.2.1	Participate in a relevant meeting or shift briefing of any Incident Emergency Management Team or Regional Emergency Management Team, daily for the duration of an emergency response	Support in full and implemented
4.2.2	Attend a relief centre or community hub, or a community meeting, to provide information about incident and response activities	
4.2.3	Take reasonable steps to ensure that relief centres and community hubs can continue to operate during a prolonged power outage	
4.3	Backup generation:	
4.3.1	Divest backup generators	Not Support
4.3.2	Electricity distribution businesses to continue exploring use of larger mobile backup generation	Support in full
4.3.3	Electricity distribution businesses to explore increased use of microgrids and Standalone Power Systems (SAPS)	

Recommendation 5: Prioritising the restoration of power following an outage

5.1	Improve the life support register	Support in full
5.2	Maintain a priority service register (PSR)	Support in principle
5.3	Prioritise the restoration of power having regard to the PSR and State Emergency Management Priorities	Support in part
5.4	Avoid non-urgent scheduled maintenance	Support in full

Reduce the impact of prolonged power outages *continued*

Recommendation 6: Communication with customers before and during prolonged power outages

6.1	General information provision obligations for electricity distribution businesses to	
6.1.1	Provide information to their customers	Support in full
6.1.2	Receive information from the local councils	
6.1.3	Assist local councils with pre-preparing customers at high risk of prolonged power outages	
6.2	Directions powers to compel provision of information	
6.2	Secretary DEECA, or delegate, should be given a new directions power to require the electricity distribution businesses, if requested following a major energy emergency, to provide additional information	Support in full and implemented

Recommendation 7: Delivery of relief to customers affected by prolonged power outages

7.1	Victorian Government should review the co-ordination and availability of relief programs for prolonged power outages	Support in full
7.2	Victorian Government should commit to funding Prolonged Power Outage Payments (PPOP)	
7.3	Electricity distribution businesses should administer payment	Support in full and implemented
7.4	Secretary DEECA, or delegate, should be given a new directions power to require the electricity distribution businesses, if requested following a major energy emergency, to provide customer information and/or take reasonable steps to deliver or assist in the delivery of relief activities	

Recommendation 8: After action reviews to improve outcomes for customers impacted by prolonged power outages

8	Electricity distribution businesses to conduct and publish after action reviews	Support in full
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Recommendation 1

Immediate reforms to drive investment in the current regulatory period

A Network Resilience Investment Strategy should be developed in the short term, with actions that can start immediately and lead to investments and solutions in the most high-risk areas by 2025. This would involve implementing the sub-recommendations below.

Sub-recommendations:

- 1.1 Identify high-risk locations.
- 1.2 Conduct geospatial analysis.
- 1.3 Support local councils to identify the needs of community hubs.
- 1.4 Identify range of potential investments.
- 1.5 Identify preferred investment solution(s).
- 1.6 DEECA to conduct cost-benefit analysis and approve investments.
- 1.7 Introduce new regulatory obligations to invest.

RESPONSE: SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

Even though climate change is leading to more frequent and severe extreme weather events, electricity distribution companies are not currently obligated to evaluate the risks posed by climate change to their networks or invest in measures to make their systems more resilient against these risks. In response, the Panel recommended that Victoria establish a Victorian Network Resilience Investment Strategy to drive electricity distribution businesses to invest in resilience solutions by 2025 in areas that are at high risk of prolonged power outages caused by extreme weather events.

The government supports the need to address this regulatory gap to drive resilience investments in the electricity distribution network given the increased threat of extreme weather events on electricity infrastructure. In response to the storms and informed by the Panel's findings, the government commenced a series of Energy Resilience Studies. These studies focused on boosting network resilience and delivering energy backup systems in high-risk areas to ensure community relief hubs and key infrastructure maintain power during extreme weather events.

DEECA worked with electricity distribution businesses AusNet Services, Powercor and United Energy on the studies to identify network and geographical areas that are at risk of prolonged power outages. Electricity distribution businesses and the government engaged with local councils

and the community to understand specific requirements of local communities located in high-risk locations. These findings played a crucial role in determining the investment solutions at the most high-risk locations.

Since the completion of the studies in October 2022, the government provided \$8.1 million towards the Energy Resilience Solutions which will see the delivery of energy backup systems in up to 24 towns affected by the June and October 2021 storms. Energy backup systems identified as suitable options included rooftop solar, batteries, diesel generators and larger town-scale energy solutions. AusNet Services and Beon will commence preparation works, and installations will begin by March 2024.

The Energy Resilience Studies and Solutions together achieve the Panel's recommendation to require electricity distribution businesses to invest in resilience in the current regulatory period ending 2025, and has mitigated the need for further regulatory obligations on electricity distribution businesses in the current regulatory period.

Recommendation 2

Medium term, enduring reform to embed resilience investments in the Victorian regulatory framework

The electricity distribution businesses should be required to take an all-hazards approach to risk mitigation for the purposes of safety, reliability, security, and resilience of the electricity system. This should result in a regular assessment (at least every five years) of the need for investing in solutions for the most high-risk locations, from 2025 onwards, and ongoing investments.

Sub-recommendations:

- 2.1 Develop a 5-yearly Network Resilience Plan.
- 2.2 Incorporate and refresh the Prolonged Power Outage Risk Assessment (PPORA).
- 2.3 Submit plan, comply with regulatory requirements.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL - RECOMMENDATION 2.1 & 2.3

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - RECOMMENDATION 2.2

The Panel recommended that electricity distribution businesses develop a Network Resilience Plan every 5 years. The government recognises that extreme weather events are likely to become more frequent and severe. Therefore, it is important that electricity distribution businesses should regularly assess the resilience of their networks to extreme weather events. These plans would employ an all-hazards approach to evaluating and mitigating risks to their electricity distribution networks and comply with its plan and proposed actions to ensure their networks remain resilient into the future.

To ensure Network Resilience Plans consider all possible hazards on networks, the Panel recommended that electricity distribution businesses incorporate updated climate risk assessments (i.e., PPORAs) for areas of their network that are at high risk of prolonged power outages. The government supports this approach and will consider using any existing obligations to implement the recommendation.

By working further with electricity distribution businesses, the government intends to establish the framework for the submission, assessment and approval of the Network Resilience Plans. A suitable regulator will maintain oversight and enforce compliance to ensure electricity distribution businesses continue to reduce the likelihood of prolonged power outages. The government acknowledges that electricity distribution businesses have existing obligations that address different types of resilience factors. The government will aim to minimise new obligations.

Recommendation 3

Longer term reforms to embed resilience investments in the national regulatory framework

The national legislative framework should be amended to drive electricity distribution business investment in resilience in the longer-term. To implement these changes, the Panel proposes that the Victorian Government should seek to amend the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) framework, through working with the AER and through a series of proposed Rule changes, to embed resilience in the national framework from the next regulatory period (from 2026 onwards) and avoid the need for Victorian Government intervention in the longer term.

Sub-recommendations:

- 3.1 AER to assess willingness to pay.
- 3.2 National framework to account for resilience as a capital expenditure.
- 3.3 Introduce a new regulatory mechanism to drive resilience.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL - RECOMMENDATION 3.1 & 3.2

NOT SUPPORT - RECOMMENDATION 3.3

The National Electricity Rules only require electricity distribution businesses to improve the security and reliability of the power supply. They must create investment plans that are assessed and approved by the AER. Whilst this helps with some measures to make the networks more resilient, resilience is also about being prepared for and recovering from natural disasters.

To address the concern around the national framework not explicitly mentioning resilience, the government supports the Panel's recommendation to submit a Rule change for the National Electricity Law framework to account for resilience as a capital expenditure. Following government policy and consultations with stakeholders, the government will support work for an improved framework that promotes increased long-term investments in network resilience by electricity distribution businesses.

There is limited understanding of customers' willingness to pay for proactive resilience investments. The Panel recommended investigating customers' willingness to pay for proactive measures to avoid or mitigate the impacts of natural disaster events. The Panel noted this work was necessary to ensure that resilience measures do not increase energy costs, should a Rule change request be submitted to the Australian Energy

Market Commission (AEMC) for the AER to account for resilience as a capital expenditure.

The government supports the need to assess customers' willingness to pay for proactive investments. The AER has resumed its work assessing customers' willingness to pay for these proactive investments, through its work on updating the Value of Customer Reliability. This work will be assisted by the research already conducted by some electricity distribution businesses following the 2021 storms.

The government acknowledges that New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, and Northern Territory distribution businesses are developing resilience-related proposals to be considered in their 2024-2029 regulatory control period. The government expects Victorian distribution businesses to identify resilience solutions and investments when developing their regulatory proposals for 2026-2031.

The government believes that incentive schemes are not necessary because implementation of other recommendations will create necessary obligations on electricity distribution businesses to proactively invest in resilience. The reduced need for incentive schemes is also informed by the mixed sentiments customers have towards current incentive schemes.¹

¹ For more information on the AER's recent review into incentive schemes for Network Service Providers, please see the Final Decision Paper: [AER - Final decision - Review of incentive schemes for networks - 28 April 2023](#)

Recommendation 4

Partnering with communities and local councils in emergency planning and response

The electricity distribution businesses should be required to partner with communities and local councils in emergency planning and response.

Sub-recommendations:

- 4.1. Support municipal and regional emergency planning.
- 4.2. Provide directions powers for Regional and Incident Controllers to direct electricity distribution businesses to assist in emergency operations.

- 4.3. Backup generation.
 - 4.3.1. Divest small-scale backup generator program.
 - 4.3.2. Electricity distribution businesses to deploy large back up generation.
 - 4.3.3. Electricity distribution businesses to roll out microgrids and SAPS.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL - RECOMMENDATION 4.1, 4.2, 4.3.2 & 4.3.3

NOT SUPPORT - RECOMMENDATION 4.3.1

Prior to the June and October 2021 storms, electricity distribution businesses were not consistently involved with communities in emergency planning and management despite the recognised benefits their engagement has at both the municipal and regional level. Current emergency planning arrangements do not explicitly outline that this is a responsibility for electricity distribution businesses. In response, the Panel recommended that electricity distribution businesses have more responsibility to engage with communities and local councils.

The government supports the Panel's recommendation to require electricity distribution businesses to partner with communities in emergency planning, response, and recovery. The government will work with electricity distribution businesses to ensure engagement with communities is consistent and effective.

In addition to promoting partnerships between electricity distribution businesses and communities, the government has introduced a directions power for the Secretary of DEECA or delegate. This directions power can be used to direct electricity distribution businesses to provide information and/or take reasonable actions to help provide relief. In the emergency management framework, the Secretary of DEECA can delegate relevant powers to Regional and Incident Controllers.

Whilst acknowledging that electricity distribution businesses can play a more active role in partnering with communities and local councils in emergency planning and response, the Panel also noted the role of the backup generation. The Panel recommended that the government divest its existing fleet of small-scale generators, and that electricity distribution businesses should continue to explore the use of larger mobile backup generation and the deployment of standalone power systems to mitigate the impacts of prolonged power outages.

The government supports the Panel's recommendation that electricity distribution businesses should continue to explore the use of larger mobile back up generation to assist with restoring essential services, community hubs, and will assist industry in doing so.

However, the government noted that feedback on the small generator program was mixed and there is considerable support for it to continue. Instead of divestment, the government will continue to manage the small generator program and consider how issues with the program as currently configured that were identified by the Panel can be addressed. This includes examining the suitability of the existing fleet and maintaining a smaller fleet of small generators, the approach to distribution, installation and refuelling, as well as exploring potential alternative ownership models.

Recommendation 5

Prioritising the restoration of power following a prolonged power outage

The electricity distribution businesses should have new obligations to improve the prioritisation of the restoration of power following a prolonged power outage.

Sub-recommendations:

5.1 Improve the life support register.

5.2 Maintain a priority service register.

5.3 Prioritise the restoration of power having regard to the priority service register and State Emergency Management Priorities.

5.4 Avoid non-urgent scheduled maintenance.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL - RECOMMENDATION 5.1 & 5.4

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - RECOMMENDATION 5.2

SUPPORT IN PART - RECOMMENDATION 5.3

Following an outage event, electricity distribution businesses restore supply in priority order, and to a large extent, the order of restoration will be dictated by the nature and location of the faults. However, there is a level of discretion, and it is important for electricity distribution businesses to consider the impact of outages on particular customers.

Electricity distribution businesses maintain a register of life support customers and in a prolonged power outage these customers are given restoration priority. The Panel identified several shortcomings since the implementation of the life support register. The government supports the Panel's recommendation to review the life support register and its de-registration process and will draw on findings of a recent review in 2019 by the Essential Services Commission that strengthened life support protections for customers.

To ensure assistance is prioritised for those customers and assets that require extra support, the Panel also recommended developing a priority service register to identify vulnerable persons, critical infrastructure, and community assets for prioritisation during power restoration. Further, the Panel also noted that electricity distribution businesses should align their restoration priorities with the State Emergency Management Priorities. The Panel found that vulnerable customers including children, the elderly and people with disabilities were exposed to significant risks during the storms.

While stakeholders were supportive of registering critical infrastructure and community assets, they cautioned against creating a register for vulnerable persons. Concerns were raised that the register could lead to major logistical challenges, considering the already complex obligations around life support registers. The government does not consider it necessary to create a priority service register. Councils maintain a similar register for vulnerable persons. Electricity distribution businesses can work more collaboratively with councils to access these registers to improve emergency response and recovery for this cohort. For critical infrastructure, the government will consider the benefits and risks of allowing electricity distribution businesses to access existing critical infrastructure databases. Access to the database could improve emergency response and recovery and go a long way to achieving the Panel's objectives in this recommendation.

However, the government supports the recommendation for electricity distribution businesses to align their restoration priorities with the State Emergency Management Priorities. The government will work with electricity distribution businesses, relevant stakeholders and communities to introduce requirements to give effect to this.

Communities advised the Panel that planned outages can have financial and emotional impacts on small business and communities. The government will work with electricity distribution businesses to ensure they avoid non-urgent scheduled maintenance, to the extent possible, for a period after prolonged power outages.

Recommendation 6

Communication with customers before and during prolonged power outages

The electricity distribution businesses should improve their communication with customers before and after prolonged power outages.

Sub-recommendations:

- 6.1 Improve communication with customers and local councils.
- 6.2 A new directions power to direct electricity distribution businesses to provide information.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL

Having timely and accurate information about the progress of power restoration is crucial for the resilience of communities. Following the storms, it became clear that the communication provided to customers by electricity distribution businesses was insufficient. The current approach by electricity distribution businesses, which focuses on providing estimated restoration times to customers, is no longer fit-for-purpose in relation to extreme weather events.

The Panel recommended new information requirements to provide broader information concerning outage severity, safety messaging, and restoration progress. Additional information requirements and improved communication channels between electricity distribution businesses, communities and local councils helps to empower affected communities to make informed decisions regarding their safety during a prolonged power outage.

The government recognises that electricity distribution companies have made some efforts to improve how they provide information to customers during extreme weather events. However, by establishing specific requirements, the government aims to ensure that there is further improvement in communication during future events. The government intends to introduce new requirements for electricity distribution businesses to improve their communication between customers and local councils prior to, during, and following a prolonged power outage.

In addition to looking at ways to introduce new requirements for electricity distribution businesses to improve their communications with customers and local councils, the government has introduced a directions power for the Secretary of DEECA or delegate. This power will be used to direct electricity distribution businesses to provide information to customers when needed.

Recommendation 7

Delivery of relief to customers affected by prolonged power outages

Improve the delivery of relief payments and programs to customers affected by prolonged power outages.

Sub-recommendations:

- 7.1 Victorian Government to review coordination of and funding gaps in relief programs.
- 7.2 Victorian Government to commit to funding the Prolonged Power Outage Payments (PPOP).
- 7.3 Electricity distribution businesses be required to administer the PPOP.
- 7.4 A new directions power to direct electricity distribution businesses to support and deliver relief programs.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL

In response to the June and October 2021 storms, the government announced the PPOP program. The program provided weekly payments of \$1,680 to residential customers and \$2,500 to business customers remaining without power seven days after the event, for a maximum of three weeks.

The Panel found that there is a lack of clarity around the available relief programs, as well as citing equity issues about eligibility of relief payments and noting coordination problems. The Panel also recommended that relief payments should be formalised and that the seven-day eligibility threshold be reviewed.

The government supports the Panel's recommendation to improve the delivery of relief to customers affected by prolonged power outage by assessing relief programs provided during prolonged power outages. This will involve assessing the equitability of the current seven-day eligibility threshold for PPOP and other relief programs, as well as for government to commit to funding the PPOP for future activations during prolonged power outages.

To date, electricity distribution businesses have administered relief on a good-will basis and did so during the June and October 2021 events. Electricity distribution businesses have accurate information on which premises are impacted and are crucial in administering relief payments during a prolonged power outage. Stakeholder feedback indicated that electricity distribution businesses were, in some instances, reluctant to offer support to emergency relief efforts, such as providing paper forms for PPOP applications. The Panel recommended formalising electricity distribution businesses' role in administering PPOP, as well as allowing government to direct them to do so.

In response, the government introduced a directions power for the Secretary of DEECA or delegate to direct distribution businesses to take reasonable steps to assist in the provision of relief payments where necessary. The government has also introduced new responsibilities in the SEMP Sub-Plan for Energy that will see electricity distribution businesses continue to coordinate and provide relief payments.

Recommendation 8

After action reviews to improve outcomes for customers impacted by prolonged power outages

The electricity distribution businesses should be required to conduct an after-action review of any major energy emergency, and to publish a summary of that review including improvement actions, within six months of the event. This should include conducting customer surveys and focus groups.

RESPONSE:

SUPPORT IN FULL

Given the dynamic nature of natural disasters and the varying impacts for customers, it is crucial to continuously evaluate and adjust approaches to emergency planning, management, and response to ensure they are suitable and effective. Currently, emergency management agencies publish after-action and operational reviews in accordance with the EM-LEARN management framework and have done so for various emergencies such as the 2019–20 summer bushfire event and the June 2021 storm event.

The Panel recommended that electricity distribution businesses be required to review their response to emergencies and publish a report that includes lessons and potential improvement measures. In addition, the Panel noted that the reviews should be published within six months of the event.

The government supports this recommendation as it promotes accountability and transparency between electricity distribution companies and their customers. The government will work with electricity distribution businesses and relevant stakeholders, including community, to understand an appropriate way to implement this recommendation.

