

Program summary

The Prolonged Power Outage Payment for Residential Customers (PPOPRC) assists Victorian residential customers affected by the prolonged power outages following the storm event on Tuesday 13 February 2024. The Victorian and Australian Governments have made funding available from the Disaster Recovery Fund, with payments to eligible residential customers. This payment is distinct from the Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP), which provides a one-off emergency relief payment during the first seven days following a natural emergency.

AusNet Services and Powercor Australia Account Holders that were without power for a total of 7 days cumulatively due to specified severe weather events in Victoria are eligible for the payment. AusNet Services and Powercor Australia will administer the payment for the Victorian Government to their residential customers impacted by the prolonged power outage.

For guidelines on the Prolonged Power Outage Payment for Business Customers (PPOPBC), refer to the Prolonged Power Outage Payment – Guidelines for Business.

1 Standard Eligibility Criteria

1.1. To be eligible for a Prolonged Power Outage Payment, residential customers must:

- have a residential electricity account that is registered against a national meter identification number (NMI) for the AusNet or Powercor Australia electricity distribution networks (**Electricity Account Holder**)
- be an electricity Account Holder of a property that was without power for 7 days cumulatively, within a two-week (14 day) period, from Tuesday 13 to Tuesday 27 February 2024 as a result of severe weather events on Tuesday 13 February and Thursday 22 February.
- have not applied for, or received, a Prolonged Power Outage Payment for an electricity account that is registered against the same NMI in relation for the same period
- have made application to AusNet or Powercor Australia in the specified form, by no later than 11.59 pm (AEDT), 10 April 2024.

2 Demonstration of eligibility

2.1 Applicants must attest that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application.

2.2 To be eligible for a payment, applicants must provide the following information:

- Electricity Account Holder Name
- National Metering Identifier (NMI)

2.3 The Electricity Account Holder Name must be the name of the residential customer applying for the payment.

2.4 The NMI must be associated with the electricity account that was without power for 7 days due to the 13 February 2024 severe weather event in Victoria.

2.5 The contact information and bank details provided must match with the Electricity Account Holder details.

3 Available funding

Eligible applicants may receive up to three separate payments depending on the length of time the applicant is still without power. Once eligibility is confirmed, applicants will not be required to reapply for each week they are still without power.

If customers remain without power for an additional 7 days after the initial 14-day period, they may be eligible for a second payment. If customers remain without power for a third period of 7 days they may be eligible for a third payment.

Payments for one 7-day period for eligible customers will be \$1,920. The maximum payment that can be made to an eligible residential customer affected by a prolonged power outage is \$5,760.

4 Assessment process

- 4.1 The Prolonged Power Outage Payment will be administered by AusNet Services and Powercor Australia with oversight from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).
- 4.2 Funding will be allocated through a payment application process, through which residential customers are invited to apply for the payment.
- 4.3 Once eligibility is confirmed, applicants will not be required to reapply for each period they are still without power.
- 4.4 Each application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. If an unsuccessful applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed, they will have the opportunity to lodge a complaint or seek a review with AusNet Services or Powercor Australia.
- 4.5 Only applications that are submitted to AusNet Services or Powercor Australia before 11:59pm on 10 April 2024, will be considered and assessed.

5 Payment Processing

- 5.1 Payments to successful applicants will be paid into the bank account nominated on the application form (please note: the bank account name must match the Electricity Account Holder name).
- 5.2 Applicants eligible for more than one payment may receive up to a maximum of three separate payments depending on the length of time the applicant remains without power.

6 Compliance and Audit

- 6.1 Applications may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government, its representatives or the relevant Auditor-General.
- 6.2 If any information in the application is found to be untrue, incomplete, inaccurate or misleading the application may be rejected or cancelled, or if payment has already been made, reimbursement may be sought from the applicant.
- 6.3 AusNet Services and Powercor Australia will provide DEECA with any information necessary to facilitate the auditing of payments made in accordance with applicable Australian Standards and in a manner compliant with the Australian Government's *Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018*.

7 Other information about this Payment

- 7.1 DEECA reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 7.2 AusNet Services and Powercor Australia will endeavour to make payment to applicants within 5 business days of their eligibility being confirmed. There may be delays if the application:
 - does not meet all the eligibility criteria

- does not have correct evidence or documentation
- is a duplicate application for the same electricity account (NMI)
- has incorrect information, such as ABN or bank details (for successful applicants)

8 Closing date and how to apply

8.1 The Prolonged Power Outage Payment for Residential Customers will be open for applications until 11:59pm on 10 April 2024.

8.2 Applicants are required to apply online via their distributors' website or visit the relief hub for in-person assistance to submit their application.

- AusNet Services applicants are required to submit an application online via the AusNet Services website (www.ausnet.com.au) or visit the relief hub for in-person assistance to submit their application. A list of relief hubs can be found at the Vic Emergency website: <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/>
- Powercor Australia applicants are required to submit an application online via the Powercor website (www.powercor.com.au).

All questions in the application need to be completed and requested information is to be provided to ensure timely assessment and payment.

8.3 Any queries about applications or requests for further information should be directed to the relevant distributor. Ausnet customers can visit www.ausnetservices.com.au or call Ausnet's dedicated storm relief hotline on 1300 561 171. Powercor customers can visit www.powercor.com.au or call 13 22 06.

Program information can also be obtained by visiting www.energy.vic.gov.au or contacting the DEECA Customer Contact Centre general enquiries line at 136 186.