

Program summary

The Prolonged Power Outage Payment for Business (PPOPBC) assists business 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 to eligible businesses of up to \$2,927 (GST exclusive) per week for three weeks.

AusNet Services and Powercor Australia Account Holders operating a business from a location that were without power for 7 days cumulatively due to specific severe weather events in Victoria are eligible for the payment. AusNet Services and Powercor Australia will administer the payment for the Victorian State Government to their business customers impacted by the prolonged power outage.

For guidelines on The Prolonged Power Outage Payment for Residential Customers (PPOPRC), refer to the Prolonged Power Outage Payment – Guidelines for Residential Customers.

1 Standard Eligibility Criteria

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

- have a business electricity account that is registered against a national meter identification number (NMI) for the AusNet or Powercor Australia electricity distribution networks (Electricity Account Holder).
- have the Electricity Account Holder in the name of the business' legal name or trading name.
- be operating from a location that was without power for 7 days cumulatively, as a result of severe weather events on Tuesday 13 February and Thursday 22 February within a two-week (14 days) period from 13 February 2024.
- have an annual Victorian payroll of \$10 million or less in 2022-23 on an ungrouped basis¹.
- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN at 12.01am Tuesday 13 February 2024.
- be registered with the responsible Federal or State regulator.
- 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 in the specified form, by no later than 11.59 pm (AEDT), 10 April 2024.

2 Other eligibility conditions

2.1 Both employing and non-employing businesses are eligible for the payment, including if they work from residential premises.

¹ Where a business is in a payroll group, the payroll eligibility criteria applies to each business in the payroll group. That is, any member of a group with an annual Victorian taxable payroll of up to \$10 million in 2022-23 can apply.

3 Demonstration of eligibility

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

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

- Business' legal name
- Business' trading name
- ABN
- WorkCover Employer Number (for employing businesses only)
- Electricity Account Holder Name
- National Meter Identifier (NMI)

3.3 The Electricity Account Holder must be in the business' legal name or trading name.

4 Available funding

Eligible applicants for payment 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 (related to the 13 February 2024 severe weather event in Victoria) 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 businesses will be \$2,927. The maximum payment that can be made to an eligible residential customer affected by a prolonged power outage is \$8,781.

5 Assessment process

5.1 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).

5.2 Funding will be allocated through a payment application process, through which businesses are invited to apply for the payment.

5.3 Once eligibility is confirmed, applicants will not be required to reapply for each period they are still without power.

5.4 As part of the assessment process, any information provided by applicants will be shared and subject to verification with other government agencies including the Victorian State Revenue Office, WorkSafe Victoria, and the Australian Business Register.²

5.5 Businesses must ensure that their ABN registration information is current and accurate as at the time of application.

5.6 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.

5.7 Only applications that are submitted to AusNet Services or Powercor Australia before 11:59pm on 10 April 2024, will be considered and assessed.

6 Payment Processing

6.1 Payments to successful applicants will be paid into the bank account nominated on the application form.

² By making an application the business and Applicant consents to the assessment and verification process.

6.2 Applicants eligible for more than one payment will receive up to three separate payments depending on the length of time the applicant is still without power.

7 Compliance and Audit

7.1 Applications may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government, its representatives or the relevant Auditor-General.

7.2 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.

7.3 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*.

8 Other information about this Payment

8.1 DEECA reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

8.2 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 your 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)
does not include current or accurate information registered with relevant regulators or partner agencies, such as the Victorian State Revenue Office, Australian Business Register or WorkSafe Victoria.

9.1 DEECA reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

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

- Ausnet applicants are required to apply online via the AusNet Services website (www.ausnetservices.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 applicants are required to apply online via the Powercor Australia 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.

9.2 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 <https://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 General Enquiries at **136 186**.