

Media Release

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



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NETWORK OUTAGE REVIEW IMPROVING STORM RESPONSE

The independent panel's final report into how privately owned power companies responded to February's storms has been released – providing a plan for a quicker response and reconnections for Victorians in future outages.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio welcomed the Network Outage Review recommendations for Victoria's distribution businesses – focusing on preparedness, resource deployment and restoration of power.

The expert panel, made up of Rosemary Sinclair, Gerard Brody and Kevin Kehl, made 19 recommendations and 12 observations that form a clear pathway of improvements for distribution businesses in response to an outage.

Feedback from impacted communities and businesses was central to developing the report, with input from industry, essential services, emergency and regulatory bodies.

The report recommends a new financial support mechanism that provides more immediate support for customers impacted by outages, putting the onus on distribution business to reduce restoration times.

The panel recommended formalising mutual aid arrangements between power companies before an outage, to ensure a quicker response and reconnection.

The report also highlights the need for accurate and timely information on customer reconnection times, and the importance of ensuring that communications tools, such as outage trackers, can meet surge demand.

Some of the same communities that were impacted by prolonged outages during the February 13 storm experienced outages again last week following extreme winds. In response to the interim Network Outage Review released in July, power companies have already begun to change preparedness processes.

However, the review makes strong recommendations for improvements to power company processes and engagement to improve the response to storm-related outages. The Government will respond to the recommendations in the review later this year.

To read the final report visit, energy.vic.gov.au/about-energy/safety/network-outage-review.

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

"As severe weather events becoming more frequent due to climate change, more needs to be done to make sure Victorian communities are reconnected quickly and supported appropriately in the event of a mass outage."

"I thank the panel for their work and the communities that were impacted by storms for their input – we asked for this review to ensure Victorians receive the support they deserve in future storms and we will continue to work with distributors to ensure that is delivered."

Quote attributable to Network Outage Review panel chair Rosemary Sinclair

"Our recommendations focus on step change improvements that will strengthen support for communities – including for electricity infrastructure in high-risk areas for outages, and by other critical infrastructure operators, like telecommunications and water, in their planning and preparation for the first 72 hours of an event."

Media contact: Siobhan McKenna 0480 147 921 | Siobhan.mckenna@minstaff.vic.gov.au