



31 July 2020

## **NETWORK RELIEF PACKAGE EXTENDED TO SUPPORT VICTORIAN CUSTOMERS**

### **Statement from CEO's of CitiPower, Powercor, United Energy, Jemena and AusNet Services**

Tim Rourke  
Chief Executive Officer  
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Frank Tudor  
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Victorian households and small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 environment will continue to have electricity network charges deferred after the state's five electricity distribution businesses today voluntarily offered to extend the relief package which commenced on 1 April 2020.

AusNet Services, CitiPower, Jemena, Powercor and United Energy have committed to continue to support eligible Victorian customers for a further six months from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021 and applied to electricity bills issued in the period 1 September 2020 to 28 February 2021.

The Network Relief Package has already been extended once before from 30 June to 31 July 2020.

It has now also been modified to replicate and expand on the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) proposed rule change to be adopted by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

The resulting relief package has been developed in consultation with the Essential Services Commission of Victoria and is a sensible and pragmatic approach that will:

- apply to households and small businesses on a COVID-19 customer arrangement, payment plan, hardship arrangement or deferred debt arrangement with certain energy retailers
- allow retailers to defer the payment of network charges to distributors without incurring any interest charges as contemplated in the AEMC proposed rule change
- ensure small retailers are able to provide immediate and targeted relief for residential and small business customers enduring hardship as a result of COVID-19
- continue to support the delivery of the AER's Statement of Expectations by supporting retailers to not disconnect customers and prioritise the health and safety of customers.

Our networks are also minimising the impact of planned outages on our customers when conducting critical work in order to sustain high levels of reliability for all households and businesses during these unprecedented times.

The offer to modify and extend the Network Relief Package acknowledges the impact of the continued restrictions in Victoria and recognises the importance of affordable and reliable electricity to literally keep the lights on for all customers and keep homes warm this winter.

We encourage customers financially impacted by COVID-19 to contact their retailers directly to discuss payment and relief options.

**END**

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