

Media Release



Tuesday 21st January, 2020

AusNet Services – Support for bushfire affected customers

AusNet Services is today announcing measures to support customers in Gippsland and the Upper Murray regions who have been affected by the recent bushfires.

Many customers in these areas have already experienced lengthy power outages. For a small number of customers, the severity of the damage to the electricity network and the ongoing fire and safety conditions mean it will be some weeks before their power is fully restored.

The priority for AusNet Services is safely reconnecting customers to mains supply as soon as possible. We are also working on putting in place special assistance measures for those customers that have been impacted. These include the following:

- Fast tracking payments under the Victorian Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) scheme. Most customers whose supply has been impacted by the bushfires will be eligible for a payment of up to \$360 under this scheme. Normally it can take several months for the payments to be made so we will work to ensure that eligible customers have access to them promptly and in a convenient form.
- Waiving the Network Standing charge for all customers (between \$118-\$130 depending on the customer type) who have been without power for more than 7 consecutive days. We will either do this directly to customers or working through electricity retailers, whichever provides the best outcome.
- AusNet Services will waive fees and charges that would normally be applied to standard reconnections (on a like for like basis). As communities start to rebuild many customers will be faced with extensive damage to their electricity meters and to electrical infrastructure on their property.

We also understand the difficulties and frustration for those customers who are currently without power and whose restoration date is likely to be at least three weeks from when access is gained. We will contact these customers individually to discuss their situation and possible means of assistance. This assistance may include small, household generators which can power a limited number of electrical items such as refrigerators, lights, computers and mobile phones. This will hopefully provide some comfort for the duration of time these customers remain off power.

AusNet Services has established a Victorian Bushfires Workplace Giving Appeal and made an initial company donation of \$100,000. We will match all donations made by our employees to this appeal.

Commenting on the bushfires and these customer support measures AusNet Services Managing Director, Tony Narvaez said:

“On behalf of all of us at AusNet Services, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in these fires and all of the communities that have experienced their devastating impact.

We know that customers have lost their homes or had extensive damage and inconvenience. AusNet Services will do what we can to ease the financial burden on customers as communities begin to rebuild and recover.”

For media enquiries please contact AusNet Services Corporate Affairs on 03 9483 0989