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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AusNet Services seeks customers' views on network plans

In an Australian first, customer representatives have been directly involved in developing our regulatory proposal, resulting in a range of benefits to customers, including easier and faster processes and more affordable services, with the average bill set to fall by \$110.

Announced today AusNet Services has published its Regulatory Proposal setting out its plans for the delivery of electricity distribution services for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026 (2022-26).

The regulatory proposal reflects the outcomes of our Australian-first trial to involve customer representatives directly in developing our plans. Under the trial AusNet Services has agreed parts of its proposed services and expenditure directly with the Customer Forum.

The Customer Forum, led by the former Consumer Affairs Minister for Victoria, Tony Robinson, comprises highly-skilled, qualified individuals appointed to formally represent the perspectives of AusNet Services' customers. The trial has been oversighted by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), Energy Consumers Australia and Energy Networks Australia under the 'NewReg' approach to electricity network regulation.

By engaging more extensively than ever before with our customers, and working with the Customer Forum, we have reflected their needs and expectations by:

- **Making services more affordable:** the average bill will fall by \$110 or 12% from December 2020 to July 2021, and then will only increase in line with inflation (\$48 for an average residential customer, \$627 for an average business customer). Rural customers set to benefit from the cancellation of remote connection and disconnection charges, saving customers \$750,00 each year.
- **Improving customer communication and processes:** We've streamlined our claims process to enable easier access by our customers. We've introduced a solar connections tool, allowing more customers to connect faster. The number of simple residential solar connections that can be self-assessed and automatically approved has increased from less than 40% to more than 90%. There is also broad support for our proposed incentive scheme to encourage better customer service.
- **Maintaining reliability and safety:** Customers have made it clear that they don't want these compromised.
- **Supporting customers' rooftop solar investments:** We are proposing to allow more solar exports onto the network in line with customer expectations – using technology and targeted investment to keep the costs down.
- **Innovating to support the energy future:** Modest innovation expenditure is proposed to support the energy transition, particularly household and business investment in solar and batteries, and spread benefits to all customers.
- **Using smart meters to benefit customers:** Working with the Customer Forum we have identified more ways to use this existing technology to benefit customers.

Media Release



Importantly, AusNet Services is continuing to deliver on its bushfire safety program previously agreed with the Victorian Government. We are installing technology (REFCLs) that rapidly cuts the power to fallen lines, preventing bushfires. Nine REFCLs are already operating and successfully reducing bushfire risk for customers. This has provided peace of mind while we are dealing with the unprecedented fires in our network.

“This Proposal responds to our customers’ desire for affordable services, continuing reliable and safe electricity supply, improvements in how they experience our services and support for customers’ use of solar and other technologies.” said Tony Narvaez, Managing Director.

“The Customer Forum acknowledges AusNet Services’ genuine commitment to better understand and respond to the needs of our customers. We hope that our input into the EDPR process will ensure AusNet Services’ customers are better served and that their expectations are more closely aligned to plans for the network” said Tony Robinson, Chairman of the Customer Forum.

The Customer Forum has prepared an independent report on its findings, which is also published today. Our proposal, a plain-English overview and the Customer Forum’s independent report are all available on our website, www.ausnetservices.com.au.

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About AusNet Services

AusNet Services is the largest diversified energy network business in Victoria, owning and operating over \$10.5 billion of regulated and contracted assets. The company owns and operates three regulated networks - electricity distribution, gas distribution and the state-wide electricity transmission network. The company also has an unregulated business called Mondo, focusing on contracted infrastructure and energy services. Headquartered in Melbourne, Australia, AusNet Services employs around 1,700 people to service over 1.4 million consumers. For more information visit AusNet Services’ website, www.ausnetservices.com.au.