

Cutting off customers costs distributor \$50,000

29 May 2019

Electricity and gas

Another electricity distributor has been penalised by the state's energy regulator for leaving customers without power.

Jemena has paid \$50,000 in penalties after allegedly failing to give Greenvale customers four days notice about the planned power outage on 22 October 2018, as required under the [state's energy rules](#).

The Essential Services Commission director of energy Sarah McDowell says while it was a relatively short power outage, it still had the potential to cause harm to customers.

"A power outage is always inconvenient but for the vulnerable or elderly, going without heating or cooling without warning, and potentially also being isolated if they don't drive, can be harmful," she said.

Ms McDowell says the distributor's explanation as to what went wrong is also concerning.

"Jemena told us incorrect labelling on electrical equipment at a substation led to customers who had not been notified being cut off," she said.

It's the third time this year the commission has taken action against a distributor for failing to notify customers of a planned outage after it announced a crackdown on the practice in mid-2017.

[AusNet Services paid \\$150,000](#) after it allegedly left residential and business customers in Bass, Woolamai and Glen Forbes without electricity for three hours on 18 July 2018.

[United Energy paid \\$90,000](#) after it allegedly left residential customers in Springvale South without electricity for six hours on 1 August 2018.

Editors' note: The commission can issue energy industry penalty notices where it has reason to believe a business has committed an energy industry contravention. The payment of a penalty specified in the energy industry penalty notices is not an admission of a contravention of their electricity and gas retail licences.

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