

More notice on planned outages to keep Victorians better informed

07 May 2020

Electricity and gas

Victorian residents and small businesses will be better prepared for planned outages under changes to how electricity distributors communicate with customers proposed by the state regulator.

The Essential Services Commission has proposed improvements to the customer service standards in the [Electricity Distribution Code](#) Customer Service Standards in a [draft decision](#) published today.

Commission energy director Sarah McDowell says the code updates would mean distributors could alert customers via text message or email about planned outages and notify customers if planned works are cancelled.

“We want to modernise the way distributors communicate with Victorians so they can be prepared, ensuring customers are notified of planned outages through text messages and email, and are reminded of any works the day beforehand.

“These changes would also strengthen protection for life support customers who would receive hard copy notification as well as any electronic communication,” she said.

Other proposed changes include bringing forward payments under the guaranteed service level scheme so that Victorians are paid sooner, increasing payment levels, disclosing the reasons for planned outages at a high level and bolstering the data collected by the commission to keep the code relevant.

“Customers expect to be recognised for experiencing particularly poor performance on their network, and it’s important that they receive payments in a timely fashion when they are eligible,” Ms McDowell said.

A final decision looking at the code’s [technical standards was published in April 2020](#).

The proposed distribution code reforms are proposed to come into effect from 1 November 2020 for electricity retailers and 1 January 2021 for electricity distributors.

The Electricity Distribution Code Customer Service Standards draft decision is open for consultation until 2 July 2020 via [Engage Victoria](#).

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