

AusNet



Customer interactions and monitoring report

FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-22

Connecting communities



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

AusNet acknowledges First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate their continuing connection to Country.

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PART 1 – OVERVIEW

Background and purpose

AusNet owns and operates one of five electricity distribution networks and one of three gas distribution networks in Victoria, delivering electricity directly to customers in the east of the state and gas to customers in the west. We also operate Victoria’s electricity transmission network, which covers the entire state.

Our business delivers an essential service to Victorians, and ensuring our customers have access to safe, reliable and affordable energy services is key for the communities our network services.

Our customers range from households and small businesses to schools, councils, farms and hospitals, and to large commercial and industrial customers on our distribution networks. We also have a wide range of partners and stakeholders who help us deliver energy and have key touchpoints with our customers. They include but are not limited to customer advocates and social service organisations, retailers, generators, regulators and policy makers, tradespeople, developers and others.

2021-22 operating environment

Once again, the environment in which our customers live and work, and our network operates, has offered significant challenges. The 12 months to 30 June 2022 included:

- COVID-19 – customers have needed reliable energy supply as COVID-19 cases rose, work from home persisted, and extended lockdowns were experienced from July to October 2021.
- Rising cost of living pressures and energy crisis – 2022 has seen customers facing acute cost-of-living pressures as inflation and interest rates rise rapidly, and housing remains in short supply. In addition, multiple factors influencing the energy markets, including international coal and gas market pressures and coal power generator outages have challenged the industry, and resulted in unprecedented market intervention from regulators attempting to minimise cost impacts on customers’ energy bills.

- Extreme weather – customers were impacted by two major storms events in 2021 – one in June and one in October. These increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events are highlighting the need for energy resilience solutions.
- Decarbonisation remains a focus and the energy transition continues to accelerate, requiring new innovative solutions and investments to deliver clean energy through our networks. We are continuing to work through the challenges and opportunities presented by this transition, including how to support more rooftop solar on customers’ homes and what the transition from natural gas (a fossil fuel) to lower-emissions alternatives might mean for our electricity and gas networks.

These challenges highlight the importance of delivering on our commitments and supporting customers now and into the future as we transition to renewable energy and ensure our customers have access to affordable, resilient, reliable, and sustainable essential energy services.

AusNet is committed to supporting our customers and communities and this is a core focus of our strategy. We have six customer experience commitments that have been designed to ensure we understand our customer’s needs, make it simple and easy to get things done, and improve the lives of our customers and communities.

This report provides an overview of what we have done to deliver on these commitments in the 2021-22 financial year, which represents the first year of our 2021-26 Electricity Distribution Price Review (electricity price review) period, and some of our key focus areas for the next 12 months.

Location of our networks



1.

Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations.

2.

Establishing clearer accountability for customers.

3.

Aligning our incentives with customer outcomes.

4.

Fixing customer pain points and improving the customer experience.

5.

Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances.

6.

Making our organisation easier to deal with.

Our customer experience commitments

During our last electricity price review – the five-year planning process we are required to undertake for our electricity distribution network by regulations – we committed to deliver six customer experience initiatives over the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026.*

These initiatives are:

1. Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations
2. Establishing clearer accountability for customers
3. Aligning our incentives with customer outcomes
4. Fixing customer pain points and improving the customer experience
5. Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances
6. Making our organisation easier to deal with (includes making the claims process easier).

*Previously we referred to nine customer experience commitments. Two of these have since been grouped: 'Collaborating with the community' and 'Taking care of our most vulnerable customers' are together grouped under commitment 5. 'Making our claims process easier for all customers' has also been grouped under commitment 6. The publication of this report, and information within it, addresses commitment 9 – 'Holding ourselves to account'.

Our customer strategy

As a network business, we are conscious of the role we play in the energy supply chain to enable the energy transition. Our purpose is simple: connect communities with energy and accelerate a sustainable future.

We aim to own and operate the best energy networks, growing through connecting people with new energy. Our customer strategy is delivered through a focus on our four key strategic priorities, which help us to achieve our strategy now and into the future.

Our strategy puts our customers at the heart of our business and commits to:

- developing strategies, products, services and making decisions that are informed by customer needs
- delivering a seamless customer experience
- striving to be the connector of choice
- embedding customer-related goals into team and individual performance planning.

We recently launched our customer strategy that will guide this delivery over the next five years.

Our ambition: Build trust by getting the basics right today, and empower customers with greater choice to unlock the opportunities for a greener world tomorrow.

Our key objectives and commitments are to:

- **Earn trust by getting the basics right**
We will deliver our core services and meet our customers' expectations by making it simple and easy to get things done.
- **Reach out to our communities and make meaningful connections**
We will deliver improved reliability through network modernisation and proactively build relationships with communities and stakeholders.
- **Empower our customers to transition to a new energy future**
We will make it easy for customers to connect to new fuels and develop new products and services that they value.



Our performance

The past financial year (FY 2021-22) saw us maintain our customer satisfaction scores despite several broader challenges, including the continued impact of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns and severe storms which severely impacted on our electricity distribution network and customers. We continued our investment to improve customer experience, maintain the safety and reliability of the network and fund innovation to support the customer-led investment in solar and batteries but balanced this against price relief for our customers.

Results from our electricity distribution network

- At 7.2 this year (with 10 the maximum), this year's aggregate customer satisfaction score stayed the same as last year's.
- A rating of 9 or 10: 37% of customers who gave us an excellent customer satisfaction rating (the same as FY21).
- The Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS) also came into effect in the past year, with the start of the new electricity distribution regulatory period on 1 July 2021. Under the CSIS scheme, our financial performance is tied to our CSAT performance for planned outages, new connections and complaints. We met the CSIS targets for all but unplanned outages, which we missed by 0.1 point.

Electricity Results

	Average	CSIS Target	% of customers by satisfaction rating (0-10)		
			0-6	7-8	9-10
Unplanned outages	6.4 ↓	6.5	43%	33%	24%
Planned outages	7.7 ↑	7.4	22%	33%	45%
New connections	7.5 ↑	6.6	24%	31%	45%
Aggregate (excluding complaints, and solar and battery connections)	7.2		30%	32%	37%
Complaints	5.1 ↑	3.8	54%	23%	23%
Solar and battery connections	8.1 ↓	-	18%	31%	51%

↑ : increase from last year ↓ : decrease from last year

Data reported in Customer Interactions and Monitoring Report 2021 used the reporting period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Results from our gas distribution network

- Aggregate score: At 8.3 this year (with 10 the maximum) our aggregate customer satisfaction score remained stable with last year's result.
- Customer satisfaction rating of 9 or 10: 61% of customers gave us an excellent rating (down 2% compared to FY21).



Gas results

	Average	% of customers by satisfaction rating (0-10)		
		0-6	7-8	9-10
Unplanned outages	8.7 ↑	11%	16%	73%
Planned outages	7.9 ↑	20%	27%	53%
New connections	8.2 ↑	15%	28%	57%
Aggregate (excluding complaints)	8.3 ↑	15%	23%	61%
Complaints	4.2 ↓	78%	0%	22%

↑ : increase from last year ↓ : decrease from last year

Data reported in Customer Interactions and Monitoring Report 2021 used the reporting period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 1

Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations

Understanding our customers and the communities they live in is central to our business operations and planning.

We are committed to building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations – what they need and want from their energy supply, how they use energy now and how that might change in the future, what's working well and where we can improve. This information gives us the data and insights we need to ensure we are continuously improving current services and products, design and deliver quality services and products to meet new needs.

AusNet has several teams that interact directly with customers and contribute to building our understanding of their needs and expectations.

They include dedicated teams who:

- Conduct research with customers and other stakeholders to expand our understanding and provide us with data and insights that help us design solutions and invest in customer service improvements. We have invested significantly in our research capabilities in the past 12 months and now have research specialists delivering customer research activities via a range of ongoing and topic-specific programs.
- Hold ongoing strategic conversations with customers and other stakeholders to ensure we are across emerging priorities and responding appropriately to changes in our customers' and our businesses' environments. Some of these strategic conversations are also part of our engagement on our regulatory proposals.
- Engage with customers for key 'standard' interactions – answering customers' queries, managing connections and disconnections of properties and energy assets, metering enquiries, claims and complaints and others.
- Liaise with customers and other key stakeholders on non-standard operational issues including in response to extreme weather events, some impacts of planned and unplanned outages, solar integration, community energy solutions, and complex customer needs.
- Complete service design and delivery of customer experience improvements, using both digital and non-digital methods and programs of work, to improve the way we service customers and meet their needs and expectations.
- Facilitate our customer communications, including making sure our website is up to date with the right information, managing social media pages, facilitating communications on planned and unplanned outages, managing campaigns and producing materials in response to emerging information needs.

Our internal teams work closely together to share insights from customer interactions in their respective areas, to help build collective understanding of customers and promote their interests across the business. Additionally, we are investing resources in many customer-facing teams to build this knowledge and levels of service even further.

Key FY2021-22 engagement included:

- Extensive engagement on the future of gas and plans for our gas network as part of the Gas Access Arrangement Review (gas price review) 2023–28, including discussions on how best we prepare for uncertainty surrounding the timing and methods for decarbonising the gas load. This customer and stakeholder engagement program can be found in further detail on page 14 of this document.
- Early planning for stakeholder and customer engagement on the electricity price review 2026–31. Extensive engagement will be undertaken over the next 2–3 years.
- Staying across key events impacting customers that are outside AusNet’s control but significantly impact our customers and their energy interactions. There have been many such events in the past 12 months, including high international and domestic energy prices, cost of living and inflationary pressures, ongoing COVID-19 impacts and staff shortages, developing government climate policy and others.
- Extensive customer and community engagement is also being undertaken by AusNet’s transmission business, particularly in the delivery of new electricity transmission projects in western Victoria and Gippsland. More detail can be found on the project websites: westernrenewableslink.com.au and grez.com.au.

We also continue to engage via several key customer and stakeholder forums. They are:

	Customer Consultative Committee (CCC)	Transmission Customer Advisory Panel (TCAP)	Developer Consultative Committee (DCC)	Innovation Advisory Committee (IAC)
Membership criteria	A range of customer interest and community groups and our representatives	Directly connected customers, consumer advocates, generators, and other Victorian distributors	Various developers, their contractors and industry group members	Industry participants, customer advocates, technical advisors and our representatives
Meeting frequency	Monthly	Quarterly	Quarterly	4 monthly
Purpose	Guides our decision making so we are informed by our customers’ evolving preferences and views and considerate of things that impact our customers, including vulnerable customers	Business-as usual (BAU) forum to gather our customers’ evolving needs, views and preferences on transmission-related issues and reflect these in our transmission network strategy considerations and work program where possible	Fosters collaboration between AusNet and the development industry, including discussion of auditing, technical standards and performance reporting	Provides independent input and feedback to inform prioritisation and delivery of innovation programs. Provides a forum to engage with customer advocates and communicate lessons and outcomes from our projects to the broader industry

BREAKOUT – GAS ACCESS ARRANGEMENT REVIEW

Engaging on the future of our gas distribution network



Gas has been in the spotlight for AusNet and our customers during the past 12 months, with high international gas prices and the transition from natural gas (a fossil fuel) to net-zero emission energy sources front of mind for many. This includes for AusNet, and these conversations have been particularly important for us as we prepare the five-year plans for our gas distribution network through the gas price review process for the 2023-28 period.

To allow us to submit a comprehensive regulatory submission to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), we have been undertaking a broad and comprehensive range of customer and stakeholder engagement activities throughout 2021 and 2022. In a joint program of work, undertaken with Australian Gas Networks and Multinet Gas Networks, we strove to understand customer needs and expectations of our networks in a coordinated state-wide effort, and ensure that customers' and stakeholders' needs and concerns are addressed in our plans.

At a high level, our engagement included the following customer and stakeholder activities:

- Victorian Gas Networks Stakeholder Roundtable – a roundtable of customer and stakeholder advocates that were involved in the development of our proposal, ensuring it was balanced and met the needs of all our customers and stakeholders.
- End User Customer Workshops – A series of workshops where we gathered information and feedback from our customer base on a wide range of topics and gave our customers the opportunity to influence and help shape our future initiatives.
- Major Gas User Forum – A series of forums where we engaged with our major gas users on what they felt to be the big issues facing major gas users in Victoria, the future of gas and implications for our large customers.
- Future of Gas Expert Panel – A forum of expert panellists who were brought together to consider the future of gas and to design a set of plausible scenarios, on which our modelling work was based.
- Priority Services Program Advisory Panel – A panel of customer stakeholders established with social services organisations to collaborate with us on the design of a proposed program to better-support customers experiencing vulnerability.
- Stakeholder Deep-Dive Series – A series of four deep-dive sessions looking at the key aspects of our proposals.



- Retailer Reference Group – A series of forums held with retailers, involving them in the design of our proposal, our reference services proposal and terms and conditions.
- Greenfield Property Developers Forum – We held two meetings with greenfield property developers to inform and consult with them on relevant aspects of our proposal.
- Gas Plumber Forum – A forum held with a group of gas plumbers to discuss future of gas, renewable gas developments and understand their needs of the network.
- Gas Network Innovation Scheme – We held two collaborative sessions exploring the potential design and delivery of gas network innovation schemes in Australia. We ultimately decided not to proceed with the scheme as it was decided with stakeholders to not be the right time, given the uncertainty around gas' long-term role and cost of living pressures.
- Customer Surveys – We undertook a variety of customer and stakeholder surveys to gather feedback on our engagement, understand stakeholders' interests and views in a more systematic way and gather feedback on more sensitive subjects.
- Independent Review – Consultants were engaged to facilitate two workshops with key stakeholders to elicit and provide an independent summary of feedback on our engagement program and network proposals.

Further details on each of these engagement activities can be found on the AusNet Community Hub site:

[Visit the Community Hub site](#)

BREAKOUT – COMMUNITY HUB

Connecting online with Community Hub



In mid 2022 we launched Community Hub, an online customer engagement platform that allows us to connect more directly, online, with our customers and other stakeholders. The Community Hub also enables us to collect and share customer insights and show how customers and other stakeholders are shaping our business.

Continuing to make it easier to engage with us is an expectation among our customers and other stakeholders. Digital engagement tools are a key component to this. In addition to better meeting expectations of customers and other stakeholders, the Community Hub platform will enable us to reach more customers and stakeholders and engage in a way that better fits their busy schedules. It will help to reduce the administrative work required for engagement, freeing up our team for higher value tasks. It also provides access to a greater range of engagement tools, such as online surveys and interactive maps.

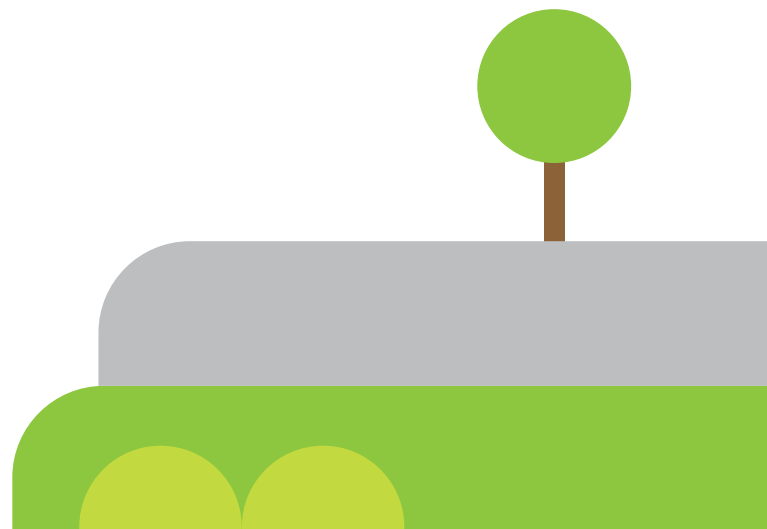
The online engagement platform provides options for publishing information and gathering feedback.

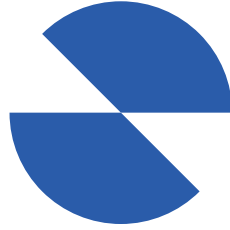
The objectives of the Hub are to:

- Provide interesting and informative content and feedback channels that make it easy and more enjoyable for customers and stakeholders to engage with us.
- Improve the quality and efficiency of our customer and other stakeholder engagement on AusNet's business planning and operational activities.
- Provide additional channels for information delivery and engagement, enabling more people to become involved with our engagement processes and improving access to these activities.
- Share information and files related to our engagement activities openly and transparently, in line with customer and stakeholder expectations.
- Promote the work AusNet is doing to engage customers and stakeholders in the design and delivery of its services.

Community Hub will be an important engagement platform for us, but we will continue to engage in a wide range of ways, including offline.

[Visit the Community Hub site](#)

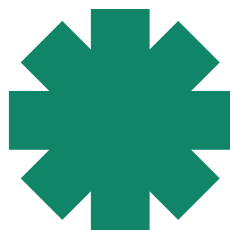




Our customer research approach

We have established a strong customer research and insights capability, with market and social research professionals embedded into our Strategy and Regulation Team. The research team's role is to help us maintain an up-to-date understanding of customers' and stakeholders' needs, attitudes and experiences, and share these insights around the business to help drive customer focus, and research-informed decision making and service design.

Our customer research activities consist of ongoing research projects, such as Customer Satisfaction (C-SAT) and Energy Sentiments, and one-off projects to inform specific projects or activities. In addition, research is central to our engagement planning for the 2026-31 electricity price review, and our commitment to developing plans underpinned by evidence-based decision making. Research projects and initiatives currently underway include:



Research activity	Purpose	Outcome
Annual customer satisfaction research, C-SAT, with residential, SME, and large customers	Provides quantitative and qualitative insights into our customers' satisfaction across our various customer groups	Develops our understanding of drivers of change to customer satisfaction and helps identify positive and negative aspects of the customer experience
Energy sentiments research is conducted with residential and SME customers	Understanding our customers' needs, wants and preferences cost-effectively and continuously enables us to meet their expectations improving the experience customers have with us	Understanding customers' attitudes toward AusNet and our services and informing our strategic decision making
Communications Campaign Tracking	To assist in the design of our communications campaigns (particularly the Summer and Winter Readiness campaigns) and measure their impact	More relevant and impactful communications campaigns
Digital Energy Futures research project (partnership with Monash University, Ausgrid and Energy Consumers Australia)	To better understand how emerging technologies are shaping the way people live, particularly when it comes to electricity usage	Insights help to ensure services and products remain relevant to customers Improvements to our energy forecasting to better reflect customer behaviour
Communication during unplanned outages research	To gather customer insights to inform updates to the Outage Tracker tool	Better meeting customers' need for information during unplanned outages by improving the online Outage Tracker tool
Value of energy resilience study	To understand the value that electricity customers in small regional towns place on electricity resilience, their views on who should pay for resilience, and how community readiness and acceptance of non-network solutions vary by location	Better understanding opportunities for network resilience and considering the value of resilience in the assessment of different options
Customer Segmentation Research	To better understand our customers, their needs, and priorities both current and future	To better meet customer needs through more customised and targeted approach, especially in the way we design our products, services and strategies and interact with our customers
Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Integration Study	To understand current barriers and explore feasible mechanisms for our customers to engage and participate in the DER market	Knowledge from this research helps refine market offers, aiming to increase customer participation in the DER market
Gas Logger Trial with RMIT and Future Fuel Cooperative Research Centre (FFCRC)	To understand householders' energy consumption patterns and practices so that we can manage better the transition to future fuels or all-electric homes	Understanding how and why different types of customers balance electricity and gas use and the implications for affordability, fairness, and choice Recommendations regarding how to better manage equity and fairness regarding the practices of householders in the transition to a low-carbon energy future
Generator connections (distribution network) study	To identify the main pain points that generators have throughout the connection process and explore potential solutions to remove these	Insights from this project help improve the experience for generators who are looking to connect to the grid through AusNet
Launch of vulnerability research grant	To build our understanding of customers experiencing vulnerability or with diverse capabilities	Findings would identify various vulnerable or diverse customers and their needs, which leads AusNet to develop effective action plans to best support them

In addition, we plan to undertake additional research as we progress with our 2026–31 electricity price review. These activities will be reported on next year and will be better-defined as we progress our planning for the upcoming regulatory period.

BREAKOUT

Energy Sentiments research



In April 2021, AusNet ran its first Energy Sentiments survey (Sentiments) which has become a twice-yearly activity, with surveying happening in autumn and spring each year.

Sentiments enables us to track strategic energy matters over time. It allows us to understand our customers' needs, wants and preferences in a cost-effective and continuous way.

We collect data on a wide range of topics, including awareness, reputation, outages, bills, customer behaviour, future energy, strategic priorities with demographics via an online survey of AusNet's electricity and gas customers. After three rounds, we can see some clear trends emerging in the research.

In the past 18 months, customers have become more cost-conscious, with almost three-in-four (74% of electricity customers and 73% of gas customers) saying that lowering costs for customers should be a top priority for AusNet. This is up by 3% (electricity) and 9% (gas) in just 12 months.

The data we're collecting is also proving very useful in helping us make critical business decisions. We have been tracking, for example, the proportion of customers who see gas as part of their home energy mix in the medium-term. We observed a significant change in this number – more than doubling in 12 months to 16% intending not to be using the gas connection to their home in 10 years' time – which gave us critical information to feed into our forward-planning for our gas network.

We're also seeing some unexplained trends – for example customers are seeing safety as less important (down 11% for electricity, stable for gas), along with reducing AusNet's impact on the environment (down 11% for electricity and 5% for gas) and investing in social impact programs (down 8% for electricity and 10% for gas).

Some interesting trends are also observed by age group. Affordability, safety, innovation and reliability are – on average – more important to older customers than younger ones, whereas younger customers are more likely than older customers to see reducing AusNet's impact on the environment and investing in social impact programs as important activities.

We intend to continue sharing trends and insights publicly and demonstrating how Sentiments and our other research programs are shaping the decisions we're making.



PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 2

Establish clearer accountability for customers

We remain focussed on ensuring customers have access to relevant contacts who can help improve their experience in a targeted and effective way. In the past 12 months, we have continued to look for ways to improve accountability for customers.



Actions to establish clearer accountability for customers

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Repositioned and expanded the Customer Engagement and Research team within our Regulation team	<p>To provide in-depth and focused customer research and engagement</p> <p>To deliver valuable insights to inform our regulatory proposals and clearly position the team as a whole-of-business resource</p>	Customer Engagement and Research team delivering ongoing business-as-usual and standalone activities to meet our reset priorities, currently the gas and electricity price reviews
Customer Passion remains a core capability in our Capability Framework	To help our people put our customers at the heart of all that we do and build their customer focussed skill and mindset	Customer Passion within the organisation's Capability Framework ensures we build internal capability and structurally position our customers at the heart of all that we do
Internal meeting agendas include a 'customer' moment in the same way we have embedded a 'safety' moment at the start of each meeting	To put 'customer' at the centre of our thinking and decision making	Meetings include a customer moment to ensure our customers are at the forefront of planning and decision making
Publishing more frequent updates on our engagement and activities via digital channels such as our website, Community Hub and on social media	To leverage online channels so customers can learn about and participate in our engagement activities	This approach provides customers with more opportunities to engage with and influence the AusNet activities that interest them, and to share our research and engagement activities more widely
Continue to strengthen our relationship with greenfield developers through the Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) and industry briefings	To facilitate better and more engagement between AusNet, greenfield developers and their representatives, and discuss and raise matters that will help to improve the experience of negotiated electricity connections for all	AusNet believes that its engagement with developers has greatly improved in the 12 months since implementation and that the DCC is delivering significant benefits for developers and AusNet. We are receiving positive feedback from developers and their consultants who have been involved in the DCC and the Industry Briefings - the last briefing was attended by more than 160 stakeholders. In particular, we believe the DCC has progressed from being in a discovery phase to being a true consultative forum
Developed a digital-first approach to the distribution of the Customer Charter	To ensure the majority of our new customers receive the Customer Charter electronically (via SMS or email with a link) within days of us connecting their electricity supply	<p>New customers now receive a SMS or email with a link to our Customer Charter within a few days of connection. They will know we're their electricity distributor and how to contact us. This digital-first approach not only reduces print waste, but ensures we're more compliant with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice</p> <p>Having our Customer Charter online means our customers can access the most up-to-date version anywhere, anytime</p>

PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 3

Aligning our incentives with customer outcome

Customer experience is embedded into our strategy. It is therefore essential we align customer outcomes to our incentives to ensure we are focused on delivering positive outcomes for our customers.



Actions to align our incentives with customer outcomes

Action	Purpose	Outcome
As of 1 July 2021, C-SAT scores feed into our Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS), tying our financial performance to customer satisfaction scores	To ensure we are incentivised through the regulatory framework to improve on multiple components of the customer experience	Clearly linking financial performance to customer outcomes and helping foster customer-focused culture Prioritising programs to improve customer experience and satisfaction
Launched customer strategy internally and reviewed our strategic roadmap	To publish a customer strategy across the wider business and update our customer roadmap	Building organisational awareness of customer priorities as identified in our strategy and ongoing review to ensure our customer-related strategic priorities are in line with customer needs and expectations
Identify customer priorities yearly in our business planning, which links to employees' KPIs Unplanned System Average Interruption Duration Index (USAIDI) and C-SAT are both part of our balanced scorecard and tracked quarterly USAIDI score to be a performance measure included in employee short-term incentive plans (bonuses)	To ensure customer outcomes and metrics are embedded in our company performance processes and are linked to the performance of our employees	Incentivising teams and employees to improve the customer experience
Continued to track customer-focused performance indicators in employee engagement surveys	To track how strongly our people are embedding a customer focus into their planning and decision making	Increase in our customer focus score in the last 12 months
Aligned our third-party providers' performance incentives with customer outcomes	To financially motivate and incentivise our third-party gas and electricity providers' performance to deliver superior customer service	Customer satisfaction targets formally embedded into third-party contracts. Monthly meetings with third-party gas and electricity providers to review results and identify improvement opportunities

PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 4

Fixing customer pain points and improving the customer experience

Over recent years, through research and engagement, we identified pain points customers experience in their interactions with us. These include connections processes, experiences with outages, and the claims and complaints process. In FY 2021-22 customer satisfaction was influenced by the time taken to reinstate services and information provided to customers during planned and unplanned outages. Communication during the approval process, ease of contacting the right person and the length of time taken to obtain approval to connect were drivers behind customer satisfaction with new connections.

We strive to continuously improve the experiences of our customers through reviewing processes and implementing initiatives to upgrade and enhance our systems and customer interactions. Improvements in these areas are recognised through our CSIS incentive scheme, in which we are rewarded or penalised for movements in customer satisfaction.



Connections	
CSIS target (maximum 10)	6.6
C-SAT average (maximum 10)	7.5 (July 2021 to June 2022)

Actions taken to improve customer experience

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Implementing a field mobility solution with our delivery partner to improve the allocation of work and information exchanged between field crews and office-based teams	<p>To enable field crews to provide more information to office-based teams, to improve data quality and reduce potential for error</p> <p>To auto-route jobs to field crews based on their availability, location and skill sets (replacing more manual processes) and enable photo-sharing from the field</p>	<p>Considerably more information is provided to our office-based teams, of improved quality and with fewer errors</p> <p>Broad application for improving the handling of faults, emergencies and new connections. Solution rolled-out across all depots on our electricity distribution network following successful trial</p>
Improving internal platforms and processes for new connections	<p>To improve our internal processes and procedures, making it easier for our team to do their jobs</p> <p>To prepare for more substantial customer improvements in the next 12-18 months, enabling our connections team to focus on increasing volumes of work and improving experience for connecting customers</p>	<p>Updated Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) processes, developed new working instructions, process mapping and process tracking and began reporting against these</p> <p>Implemented new system for reviewing customer service orders to enable timely delivery</p> <p>Created National Meter Identifiers (NMIs) for unmetered connections, providing unmetered customers with more information and better recording capabilities</p> <p>Conducted significant upgrades to ensure compliance with five-minute settlement (5MS) requirements</p> <p>Began recording meter coordinates to improve accuracy and oversight of the network</p> <p>Improvements made to the DER portal via the AusNet website</p>
Embedded generator connections satisfaction program established	To monitor the satisfaction of generators connecting to our distribution network and identify and remove pain points	Offering early works packages to our customers to inform them of development of works required, costs and risks associated with connecting generating plant to our network
Transmission connection improvements	To save cost and time for connecting parties and to improve their overall connection experience	We are working with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and generators to improve the experience of large generators connecting to our transmission network, including making the design requirements and connection process simpler and improving customer service

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Established the Developer Consultative Committee (DCC), industry briefings and quarterly reporting on key aspects of our performance connecting new estates	To foster collaboration with developers; discuss and share reporting and auditing requirements, processes and potential efficiencies; and seek feedback on new or existing technical standards or changes	Engagement has considerably improved since implementation of the DCC Positive feedback received on both the DCC and industry briefings on new bushfire safety requirements and the energy mix in new estates Enhanced standards and transparency of communications, more detail on the greenfield connection process and audit trends are delivering significant benefits for developers and AusNet
Developed new process where communities can request AusNet network data more easily Drafted communication materials (website and brochure) that outline: how communities can create, implement and manage renewable energy solutions; how to establish or conduct a community energy project; and how to gather and request AusNet network data	To support customers and communities by providing guidance and pathways to conducting community energy projects and gathering AusNet network data	Helping empower community groups and councils to understand and assess the various options available to them, and achieve their energy ambitions
Planned outages		
CSIS target (maximum 10)	7.4	
C-SAT average (maximum 10)	7.7 (July 2021 to June 2022)	

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Reviewed and refreshed planned outage card content, language and branding	To identify key areas for customer communication improvements To ensure planned outage cards are easy to read and branded correctly	Our customers are better informed on what to do during a planned outage Customers receive a card with clear information outlining the date and time of the outage



BREAKOUT

Customer experience during unplanned outages



We know that getting information during unplanned outages is really important to our customers. If they know how long the power might be out, households and businesses can make plans to minimise the inconvenience. The plans look different for everyone, but might mean taking actions like staying with family or friends, going to a community centre to charge batteries, or working from the office instead of home.

In the past 18 months our network has experienced several severe weather events, causing widespread and prolonged outages. During these events, it becomes more challenging for us to give customers accurate and useful information about when the power might come back on. To help us understand what information customers want and how best to communicate during severe weather events, we undertook some research with AusNet customers in June 2022.

The research told us that customers want information on how long it will take to restore power (96%), but many also want updates on how fixing the outage is progressing (79%), and how long it will take for the outage to be assessed (65%). Customers would ideally like to receive this via SMS/text message (93%), though AusNet's online Outage Tracker is also seen to be an important tool (46%).

We also got some insights on how best to show widespread outages – for example, customers found a visual cue highlighting an entire affected area to be more meaningful than a dot on the map. The research also highlighted communication challenges during major events. Almost four-in-five customers affected by the two major storm events in 2022 lost either internet or telecommunications, and over one-in-three lost both, which demonstrates the importance of communicating via multiple channels.

These insights have been very useful to our team as we look at ways to improve customer experience following extreme weather events. They are also critical inputs to the re-design of our Outage Tracker site that is currently underway.

Unplanned outages	
CSIS target (maximum 10)	6.5
C-SAT average (maximum 10)	6.4 (July 2021 to June 2022)

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Unplanned outage customer experience review and redesign	To enable better status tracking of customer's fault restoration times and make it easier for impacted customers to access information during unplanned outages	Process design completed for improved customer experience during unplanned outages
GSL payment process improvements	To improve the timeframe in which we pay customer GSLs for connection delays (late truck fees)	GSL payments due to late truck fees are paid to customers sooner
Reviewed and updated GSL content on the AusNet Services website	To help our customers better understand the difference between GSL compensation and major event day payments	Customers more clearly understand their entitlements during power outages, including those caused by severe storms, and how they are calculated

Claims and complaints	
CSIS target (maximum 10)	3.8 (no reward is received until we achieve a score of 5 or above)
C-SAT average (maximum 10)	5.1 (July 2021 to June 2022)

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Added claims to our C-SAT score as a trial, with a view to include them permanently. Claims will not be part of the CSIS scheme which was approved for complaints only until 2026	To improve data quality and consistency, introduce a satisfaction tracker for claims, and better understand the relationship between the claims and overall customer experiences	Following the trial, we have permanently included claims in the C-SAT program. We will continue to track claims and complaints separately, and now have robust customer satisfaction monitoring of the claims experience. This helps identify what is working well and where we can improve in a more systematic and frequent way. Sending progress updates while a claim is processed, to help address customers' desire for more visibility over the status of their claim, is one specific outcome

BREAKOUT

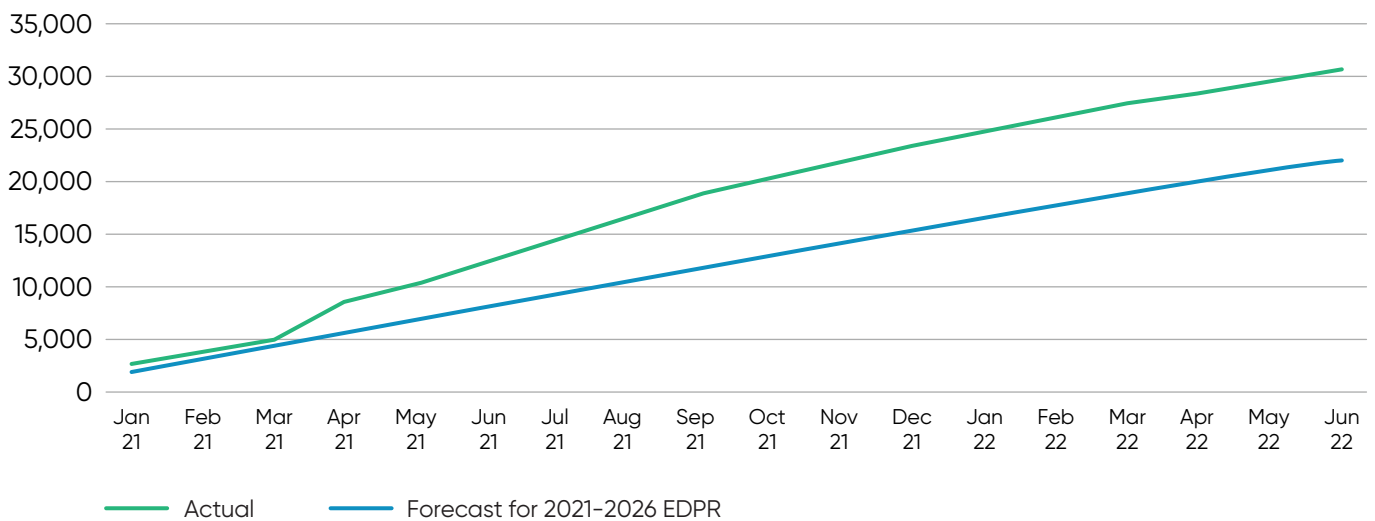
Incorporating more rooftop solar and home batteries into the network



Our customers are part of the major energy system transition that is underway. Customers are adopting a range of new technologies that are changing how they use our network, especially the significant take up of rooftop solar. This means the electricity transport service we provide has changed from a one-way to a two-way service. We will need to invest to manage and support these new electricity sources for the benefit of all customers, whether they have solar or not.

Solar connections are exceeding our forecast

Cumulative solar connections, January 2021 to June 2022, actual and forecast



We were approved funds for enabling more distributed energy resources (DER) onto our network in the 2021-26 electricity price review, which is being used across a range of projects.

Completed programs include:

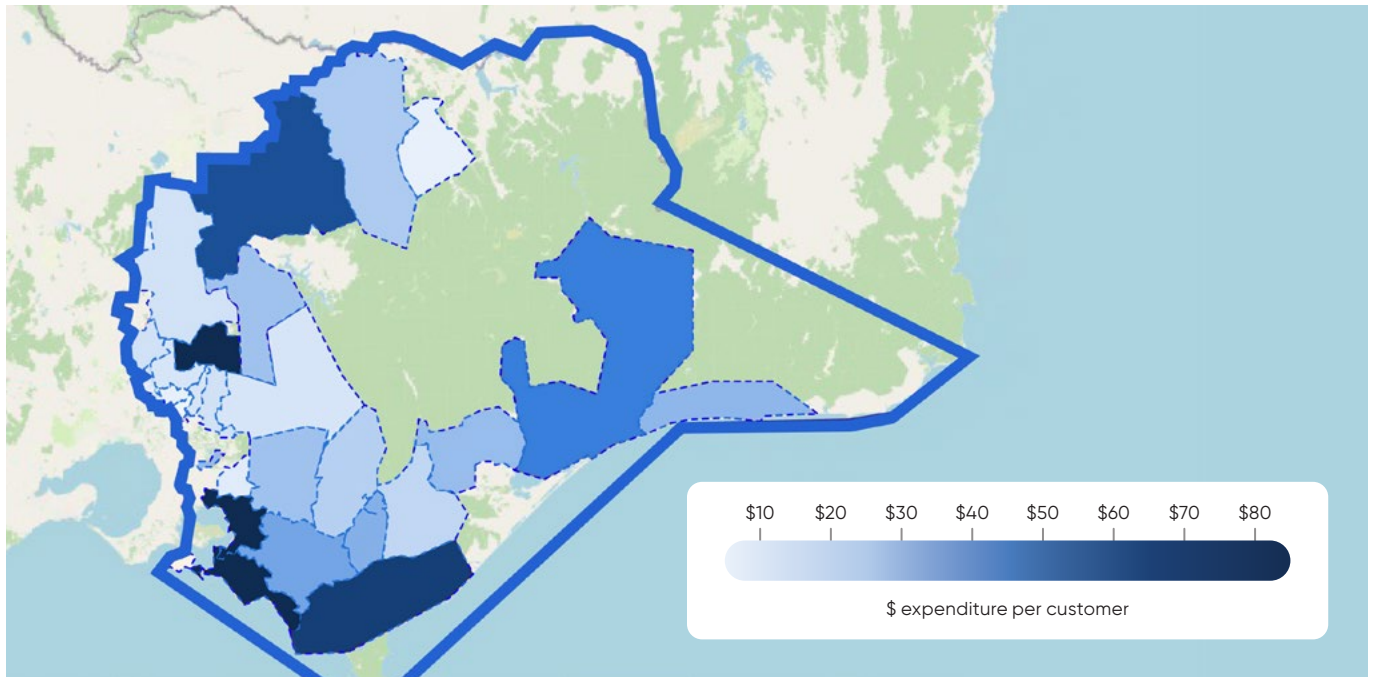
- the Supply Improvement Program FY21-FY22 – a \$5.1M initiative that includes a variety of solutions for more than 140 sites experiencing voltage issues. Solutions comprise:
 - upgrading distribution substations with a wider tapping range to cater to an increase in PV penetration
 - low-voltage circuit upgrades and rearrangements
 - rebalancing loads and the addition of high voltage and low voltage circuits.
- the Proactive Voltage Management Program Stage 1, valued at \$4.7M, includes:
 - low voltage (LV) reticulation improvements for 35 LV substations
 - replacing Voltage Regulation Relays (VRRs) at 5 locations. VRRs monitor and help ensure a stable voltage supply through different operating conditions.

New technology solutions include:

Projects currently being delivered include:

- the Supply Improvement Program FY23 – a \$4.1M initiative that continues the Supply Improvement Program FY21-FY22 and includes 56 known sites with provision for total of 75 site upgrades
- a trial nearing completion in North Region with a new VRR that enables upper and lower limits to voltage control. It will also cater for reverse power flow, which is causing voltage issues with older VRRs.
- installing a HV Statcom at a location to be determined.

Location of DER expenditure delivered to date



Distributed energy resources (DER) trials and innovation

Innovation, whether trialling new technologies or research and development, is key to ensuring greater customer value over the long run in a rapidly changing energy environment. Innovation will be needed to:

- respond to the rapidly decentralising energy system
- allow the two-way exchange of electricity and new business models, using our network to benefit all customers
- keep network costs down while adapting to this change
- protect and maintain secure and reliable network services.

The value of innovation is widely recognised. With support from our Customer Forum and approval from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), we have an innovation allowance of \$7.5m for the current regulatory period (2021-26).

In early 2022, the Innovation Advisory Committee (IAC) was established to ensure customer perspectives shape the design and prioritisation of innovation projects proposed in the 2021-26 EDPR. The IAC is actively contributing to discussions around how these funds are best used and how to extract maximum value for our innovation spending.

Summary of progress on innovation projects:

- **Project Edge** – This three-year trial seeks to create a simulated market and trading mechanisms to maximise the economic value of DER assets deployed and minimise the costs of supply to all energy customers. The trial involves extensive, ongoing monitoring.
- **Flexible exports trial** – Flexible exports are an alternative to fixed exports, which limit the amount of excess solar that you can export to the grid. Solar-flexible exports allow network operators like us to monitor and adjust rooftop solar exports in real time. This method provides more opportunity for Victorian solar customers to export their excess solar without putting pressure on the network. The trial will allow participating households to export up to 5kW of excess solar energy to the grid. Using smart solar inverters, we can balance exports against local network supply and demand. By doing this, we can begin to reduce excess strain on the network.
- **EV Trial** – partnered with other Australian electricity distributors to understand the impacts of EV charging on networks and consumers' perceived value of and willingness to pay for third-party charging solutions.

Our EDPR proposal included two innovation projects on our low-voltage network – efficient network balancing and maximising the benefits of solar for commercial customers. These have since been de-prioritised, based on learnings from other trials and the industry's changing needs. This has created an opportunity to allocate those funds toward other innovation projects, and new opportunities will be considered with the IAC.



TRIALS, INITIATIVES AND SOLUTIONS TO VOLTAGE AND DER MANAGEMENT

Investing in dynamic and innovative solutions to better optimise the network and voltages

While we continue to invest in our targeted supply upgrades and voltage management programs, we are also trialling innovative solutions, connection agreements and network tariffs that will ultimately improve the solar hosting and voltage performance of the network, enabling more renewables to connect to grid and export their excess energy. The following summarises key initiatives currently underway, and how they will improve our voltage and network performance.

Dynamic voltage management system (DVMS)

Optimising voltage outcomes across the network

- DVMS will enable voltages to be managed in a way that optimises outcomes across multiple terminal, zone and distribution substations, improving the overall voltage performance of the network
- DVMS will allow more real-time voltage management
- Pilot to start in 2023

Advanced distribution management system (ADMS)

Transitioning to a smarter distribution system operation

- ADMS will improve capabilities to effectively operate a complex and dynamic network of growing two-way flows, ensuring customers' DER is visible and manageable
- This includes a more sophisticated DVMS over time
- It is anticipated to become operational by 2026

Project EDGE

Trialling network support services with aggregators

- EDGE is trialling how consumer participation in a DER marketplace could be facilitated and rewarded, including the potential voltage services (reactive power)
- This includes trialling dynamic operating envelopes and various contractual arrangements
- Learnings from the trial will inform industry developments in this area, particularly as part of post-2025 NEM design

Flexible Exports

Flexibility through dynamic operating envelopes, dynamic connection agreements and IEEE2030.5 communications standards

- Provides constrained customers with a dynamic export option, reducing the number of customers with static zero limits
- Includes changes to connection agreements to incentivise dynamic connections
- Trial currently under way, transitioning to BAU connection offer for constrained customers from March 2023

Innovative tariff trials

Incentivising customers to charge at times of high solar exports

- We plan to trial innovative tariffs for electric vehicle customers which will incentivise customers to charge during times of high solar exports, reducing the need to manage voltage variations from solar exports
- We are also trialling how industrial customers may respond to moving consumption to times of solar exports
- The trials are planned to start in July 2023

Enabling third party solutions

Improving visibility of network constraint to facilitate a market for non-network solutions

- We are improving our data sharing capabilities and visibility of network constraints, through heat maps of solar constrained areas and locational average network voltage performance
- We are working with third parties and communities to further improve information sharing, and will participate in the development of national standards for data sharing through the Energy Security Board's Data Strategy

PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 5

Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances

As a distributor of essential services, it is crucial we collaborate with communities to ensure we identify and remove barriers to energy access and ensure safe and affordable energy supply for the communities in which we operate. As the frequency of extreme weather events is expected to increase, it is essential we collaborate with communities to ensure our customers are safe and supported during one of these events.

Within our customer base it is likely that a significant percentage of customers are experiencing vulnerable circumstances or disadvantage in some way. At any point in time they can face circumstances that affect their use of, or access to, essential services. While support for customers in vulnerable circumstances has typically been the remit of energy retailers who manage the financial relationship with end customers, we recognise that we have a key role to play and have been engaging with key stakeholders to identify how we can provide additional support.



Actions to care for customers in vulnerable circumstances

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Both summer and winter 'Be power prepared' readiness campaigns targeted electricity and gas customers, using multiple channels and media	<p>To raise awareness of our proactive work to strengthen the network and improve reliability and safety ahead of summer</p> <p>To raise awareness of energy-related actions customers can take in the lead up to and during summer and winter</p>	Increased customer awareness of how we're preparing the network for summer and winter, and energy-related actions they can take to prepare
Deferred all retailer-initiated disconnections during lockdown (Disconnections for non-payment or non-identification initiated by retailers recommenced on Monday 25 October 2021)	To help customers in vulnerable circumstances maintain their electricity and gas connection during lockdowns	<p>Customers in vulnerable circumstances had their electricity and gas maintained during lockdowns</p> <p>Engaged retailers about maintaining electricity and gas connections to customers experiencing vulnerability during lockdowns</p>
Engaged with advocates on the scope of our annual vulnerability research grant	To help us best define and identify gaps and priority areas in vulnerability research, so our grant can deliver practical and timely insights	<p>Grant advertised in August 2022. Grant recipient to deliver valuable research into vulnerable customer energy use, to build understanding and develop strategies to address identified needs or gaps</p> <p>Yarra Energy Foundation has been selected as the inaugural grant recipient and will be investigating the energy needs and dependencies of customers with disabilities over the next six months.</p>
Gas life support registration improvements	To make enhancements to our gas life support registration process so that tracking and registration is easier for retailers on behalf of customers	AusNet can register and deregister gas life support customers, in addition to retailers, to improve our service to customers and meet updated regulatory life support obligations
Electricity life support process improvements	<p>To provide additional training related to life support procedures for customer service team members.</p> <p>Undertook extensive cleaning of incorrect records, uplifted supporting systems to improve management of life support records. Enhanced deregistration process for customers who no longer require a life support registration</p>	<p>Reduction in duplicate life support tagging of sites, resulting in ability to concentrate and provide an improved service for our life support customers</p> <p>Proactively engaged with retailers to seek to obtain medical confirmation for those life support customers that were/are not medically confirmed</p>
Reviewed and updated all life support customer letters, call scripts, fact sheets and emails with simpler language, more imagery and interpreter service information in preparation for integrating these updates into communication templates	<p>To remind life support customers to complete their registration and to make it easier for them (especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) to be prepared for an outage</p> <p>To encourage customers requiring life support services to register their life support status with us</p>	<p>Our life support customers have a greater understanding of what to do during an electricity or gas outage</p> <p>People with life support customer requirements receive prioritised communication during an outage</p>

BREAKOUT – SUMMER CAMPAIGN

2021-22 Summer Readiness campaign



CAMPAIGN

**Be power prepared
this summer**

TIMING

Dec 2021 - Feb 2022

AUDIENCE

AusNet's electricity customers

At AusNet, we believe in the safe, reliable supply of energy to homes and businesses. Our electricity distribution network covers 80,000 square kilometres of Victoria, with 93% in rural and regional areas. We supply electricity to more than 765,000 residential and business customers.

During summer, high electricity demand puts additional pressure on the network – resulting in potential power outages. Extreme weather conditions, such as storms and bushfires, can also impact our network and interrupt the supply of energy to our customers.

To keep our customers informed, we reach out to them every summer to let them know:

- how they can prepare for the summer peak demand
- what we are doing to prepare the network for summer.

Key customer campaign messages

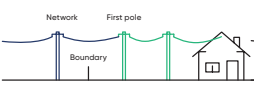
- Register your mobile number – SMS is a great way to stay informed during a power outage. Make sure your energy retailer (the company who sends your power bills) has your correct mobile number – they'll pass it onto us.
- Report an outage – report faults and emergencies on our 24/7 hotline: 13 17 99.
- Get bushfire ready – create or update your bushfire safety plan and be ready to use it. Download a Fire Ready Kit from the CFA website.
- Trees, grass and shrub clearing – overgrown trees, plants and grass should be cut back to reduce bushfire risk. If you own a Private Overhead Electric Line, now is the time to make sure it is in safe working condition.
- Life support customers – if you're a life support customer, please review your emergency plan and be ready to activate it if the power goes out. Life support customers can call our priority line on 1800 818 832. We're here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, see the Life support customers page on our website.

AusNet

Identifying an overhead Private Electric Line (PEL)

Example 1
First pole onward

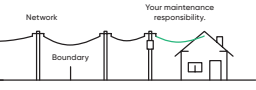
Where an overhead line originates from a public roadway and is carried onto your land by private poles, your maintenance responsibility starts with the first pole.



Your maintenance responsibility.


Example 2
Transformer on a pole

Some lines on your property may have a transformer fitted. If this is the case, your maintenance responsibility starts where your line(s) are connected to the pole, not the transformer or the pole.




Your maintenance responsibility.

Note: On the pole with the transformer all connection boxes and circuit breakers mounted or associated with your line(s) are your responsibility.



For more information

If you're still not sure about the status of the electrical installation on your property, more information is available on our website.
www.ausnetservices.com.au/PEL



Download our handy checklist

While you're on the website you can download a maintenance checklist including all the things to look for.

POWER PREPARED TIP


#07

Protect your appliances

A voltage variance can damage your appliances. Switch off or unplug sensitive electronics during an outage to prevent damage.






AusNet services





 **Be power prepared this summer**

It's time to get ready for summer, learn more at: ausnetservices.com.au/powerprepared

Need more information?

-  1300 360 795
-  ausnetservices.com.au
-  AusNet Services
-  We speak your language. If you need an interpreter, please call **13 14 50**.
-  Provide our phone number when choosing your preferred relay service access option.

 **Safety first**

Always use a Registered Electrical Contractor when undertaking work on your line.



Be power prepared this summer

Coming into summer, we continue working hard to keep the network safe and reliable.

We all have a part to play.

ausnetservices.com.au/summer

AusNet services

AusNet

Be power prepared this summer

Coming into summer, we continue working hard to keep the network safe and reliable.



We all have a part to play.

ausnetservices.com.au/summer



Campaign results

Key AusNet campaign messages

- We trimmed 216,000 trees in high-risk bushfire areas to keep our communities safe.
- We are responsible for 334,000 power poles and 90,500 streetlights.
- We inspected 130,000 poles that support the network.
- We maintained 38,200 kilometres of overhead powerlines to keep our communities connected.
- We installed five Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiters (REFCL) to help prevent bushfires in high-risk areas.

Campaign channels

- TV – catch-up or video-on-demand
- Print and radio ads
- SMSs and emails
- Letters with fridge magnets
- Social media (organic and paid)
- Digital (Google Adwords, AusNet website)
- Partner channels (local council website and social media)
- Local MP briefings



8.8M+

viewed more than 8.8M times on catch-up TV or video-on-demand



3.6M+

people watched our 'Be power prepared' video



1.1M+

people saw the campaign on Facebook

18k+

people visited our website from Facebook

600k+

customers received an SMS

30k+

customers received an email

30k+

customers received a letter with a fridge magnet

BREAKOUT

Energy resilience



Increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events is being experienced globally due to climate change. As a rural distribution network, we are exposed to the impacts of extreme weather, including bushfires and storms. It is important to aim to minimise the impact of these events on our customers and communities, which includes the impacts of electricity outages impacting homes and essential services. The two storms and subsequent outages experienced by customers on our networks in 2021 highlight the importance of planning and building energy resilience.

October storm response

On the morning of Friday 29 October, a severe storm caused the state's largest single electricity outage on record, with more than 780,000 premises left without power. Victoria's five distribution businesses immediately activated incident response teams and field crews worked around the clock shifts to get the lights back on.

In comparison to the June 2021 storm, this event had:

- a much wider geographic spread, significantly impacting all five electricity distributors
- a greater number of electricity poles and more than 1,000 wires down
- more single-line customers impacted, but easier access to sites for repairs.

AusNet had around 230,000 customers impacted by the event and most had their power back on by end of the first day of the recovery effort. Within 40 hours 80% of customers' power was restored. Strike teams were set up to support our AusNet customer teams who were inundated with calls and messages on social media from customers wanting information about their restoration times through to how to make claims for spoiled food.

Over the course of the week:

- our Customer Service Centre received over 82,000 calls
- we recorded almost 900,000 views on our outage tracker
- our social media direct messages ballooned to 6,800 messages – an increase of 800% on normal periods.

Improvements to storm response

We completed a detailed review of our processes following the storm and identified various improvements to ensure we are prepared for future events. In FY22 we have:

- Leveraged the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to streamline the administration of Prolonged Power Outage Payments (PPOP) after the October 2021 storm on behalf of the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP). This improved response and payment processing times for eligible customers. It also made it easier to advise of application status and respond to customer enquiries.
- Reviewed and enhanced our Emergency Management Team (EMT) through additional resourcing and training.
- Scoped improvements to our estimated time to recovery (ETR) process with the aim of improving communication and accuracy of information provided to our customers during an outage.
- Identified additional improvements to be made in CY22 and early CY23, to continue customer experience improvements for our unplanned outage journeys. There will be a focus on improving visibility and accuracy of communications with customers off supply.

Building energy resilience

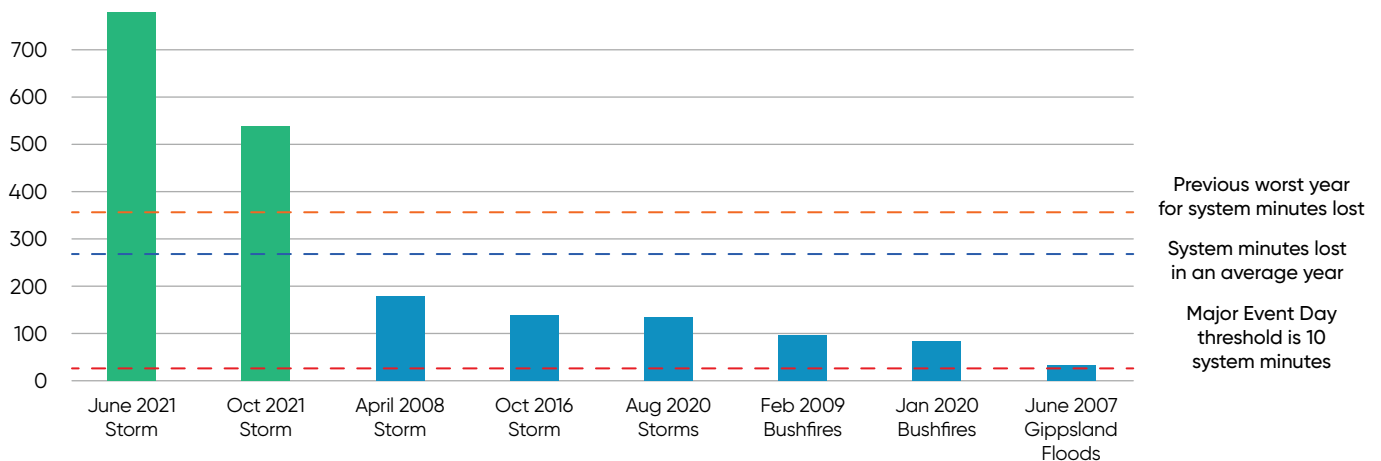
It is becoming increasingly important to build community energy resilience as climate change is expected to exacerbate the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Building energy resilience has been a key focus for AusNet, communities and governments in FY 2021-22. AusNet has been working closely with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), undertaking significant work to improve information-sharing, support services and network resilience during extreme weather events.

There are various ways to build energy resilience, including:

- investing in network upgrades
- roll-out of temporary generation
- establishing community solutions, such as microgrids, to enable essential services in communities to access electricity during an event.

Throughout FY 2021-22 we have been engaging with DEWLP on their Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review. Recommendations from the review include short-and long-term reforms to ensure immediate and enduring investment to build resilience for Victorian communities. Specifically, it is recommended that the Victorian Government appropriately incorporates resilience into the regulatory framework, to ensure resilience-specific investment can be funded in the 2026-31 electricity price review.

Severity of 2021 storms (measured in system minutes) compared to other recent extreme weather events



CASE STUDIES

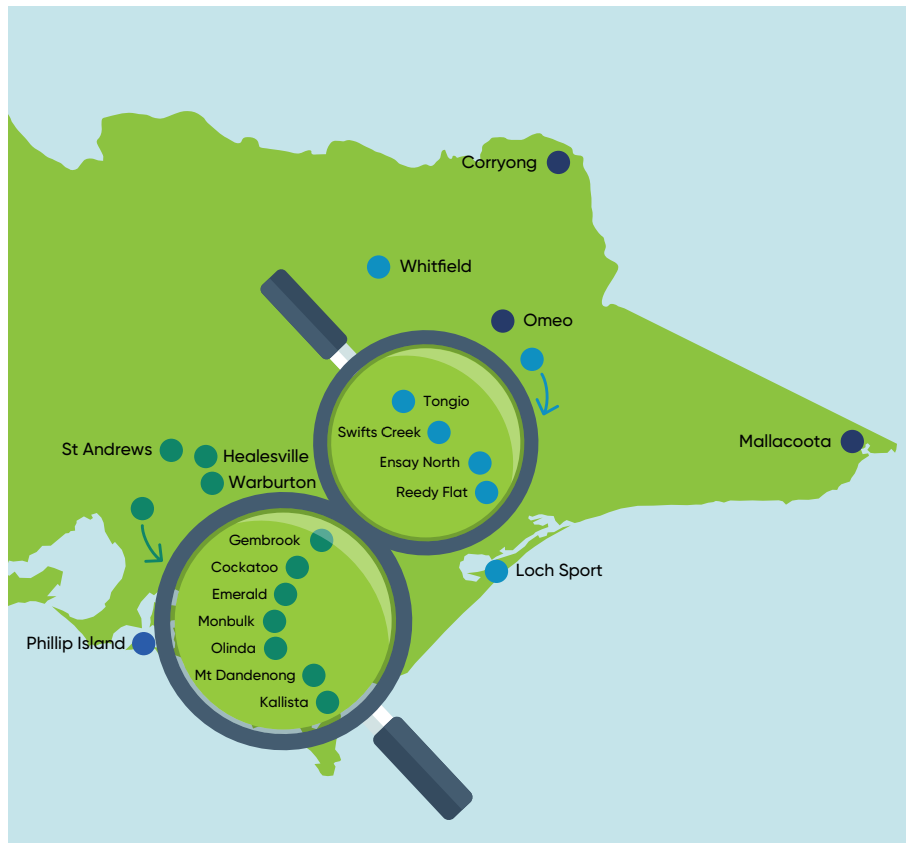
Actions taken to build energy resilience in FY 2021-22:

- Standalone Power Systems (SAPS) Tranche 1 – As part of a two-year trial, AusNet commenced the design, development and delivery of SAPS for a selected group of customers within our network over the FY 2021-22 period. The purpose of the trial is threefold: to evaluate SAPS reliability, to better understand longer-term customer sentiment for local renewable energy sources and the learnings from installing or commissioning in-front-of-the-meter distributed energy resources on our network. The systems were designed, and assembly of the units commenced in FY 2021-22 with the operationalisation of these SAPS to be finalised by the end of Q1 2023.
- DELWP Energy Resilience Design Studies (EDRS) – Following the storms in June and October 2021, and in partnership with DELWP, AusNet began conducting feasibility assessments for the 11 storm-affected towns shown below. The feasibility studies were completed in Q3 2022 and the project is now in the delivery phase, with resilience solutions for essential services sites in the 11 towns to be installed by late 2023.
- DELWP Community Microgrids and Sustainable Energy Program (CMSEP) – In response to the 2019-2020 bushfires, and as requested by DELWP, AusNet undertook preliminary works for various energy solutions – including ‘islandable’ microgrids, behind-the-meter systems and heat pumps, for Mallacoota, Omeo and Corryong. The first phase of energy resilience for these three (bushfire) towns are now in delivery.
- Phillip Island Community Energy Storage System (PICESS) – In FY 2021-22, AusNet began work to install a Grid-Scale Battery Energy Storage Solution (BESS) to support peak demand for the Phillip Island Community during the summer months. PICESS is currently in the process of installation, with the battery scheduled to be fully operational by end of Q1 2023.

The various resilience projects and their locations can be seen below in the diagram.

Key resilience opportunities in progress across our network

Solutions	Location
DELWP CMSEP Project (multiple combined solutions)	● Mallacoota Omeo Corryong
DELWP ERDS Project Microgrid, Front of the meter SAPS and ESS	● St Andrews Healesville Warburton Gembrook Cockatoo Emerald Monbulk Olinda Mt Dandenong Kallista Loch Sport
Battery Energy Storage Solutions	● Phillip Island
Standalone Power Systems (single customers only)	● Whitfield Tongio Swifts Creek Ensay North Reedy Flat





PART 2 – DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment 6

**Making our organisation
easier to deal with**



We have implemented several initiatives to improve interactions with our customers and other key stakeholder groups. Many of these have already been mentioned in earlier sections of this report, but there are a few more we'd like to specifically call out. They include uplifting our AusNet website and our claims and complaints process and implementing a customer relationship management system (CRM) to help better serve our customers and improve their interactions with us. We will also be further supporting our large electricity and gas customers by providing them a key account manager who will facilitate account-related enquiries.

Actions to improve our interactions with customers and stakeholders

Action	Purpose	Outcome
Designed and built a new website that improves searchability, functionality and readability based on in-depth customer insights and requirements	To develop a website that makes it easier for our customers to find the information they need and for the business to share key content	A new website was launched for public use in August 2022
Implementation of a CRM	To manage our customer relationships and interactions in one place	Improved tracking of customer interactions across different channels and increase in relationship management for customers
Customer Self-Service Program introduced	Design improvements made to forms within our website to offer both streamlined and additional self-service options to customers	Increase in the total number of self-service options available for customers and stakeholders on our website Redesign of existing website forms making them easier to use
Customer Service Capability Uplift (knowledge management and dedicated trainer)	To improve process-related customer service knowledge, resources and reference materials To improve soft-skills training for our customer service staff	Knowledge management database including on-the-phone support and soft-skills training to improve service for our customers and stakeholders

BREAKOUT

Embedding customer passion



We have been building our customer focus capability to support our external market but equally we are looking at opportunities to listen and learn from our internal customers too. Across the enterprise we run a monthly engagement survey. This helps us focus on changes we need to make internally but also provides a deliberate test of customer focus for our people. Over the past 12 months we saw a positive trend on customer focus overall (69% on average from July 2021 to June 2022).

We have also been deliberate about embedding customer passion as part of large-scale learning and leadership interventions, including our leadership programs, enterprise learning and new starter experiences. We have a dedicated set of capabilities we focus on as an enterprise. Among these, customer connection is key and will be part of our ongoing development of our talent in line with our strategy.

PART 3

FY23 Priorities

We are committed to ensuring we improve customers' experiences each year, through our different streams of work. For the next year we will focus on:

Research and engagement

Our research and engagement activities will include:

- Commencing our electricity price review 2026-31 engagement. This will involve establishing customer panels and sharing our plans and approach for engaging on various high priority issues, including uptake of DER, EVs, and network resilience. If you would like to be involved, please keep an eye on our Community Hub.
- Stakeholder engagement on the Future of Gas, in response to the Victorian Government's gas substitution roadmap. This will include engagement with developers.
- Customer segmentation research.
- Undertaking tariff trials for small and large customers.

Customer experience improvements

Activities designed to enhance customer experience comprise:

- Undertaking DER connections journey mapping and review - as identified in our work plans, we will be focussing on improvements in this upcoming year, and aiming to report on metrics.
- Unplanned Outage Management Improvement Program and Outage Tracker uplift.
- Continued focus on understanding and improving the management of customers experiencing vulnerable circumstances.
- A continued focus on optimising our operations and processes across our key customer interactions. This includes improving process for customer connections and simplifying the customer experience, with a strong focus on automation.

We would love to hear from you

Our focus continues to be making it easier for our customers to engage with us. If you have feedback on your experience or a suggestion for the future, we would love to hear from you.

✉ engagement@ausnetservices.com.au

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