

A message from our CEO, Rob Stobbe



Every one of us has a role to play in helping our community and State get through this Coronavirus pandemic.

At SA Power Networks, we are balancing the need to ensure we keep our community and people safe, with the need to help keep the State running.

Our organisation is well versed in emergency management and response and we have robust business continuity plans in place for our field crew and office-based teams (many of whom are working from home).

We also have essential equipment and key personnel based at strategic locations, and we're working closely with our suppliers to ensure we have what we need to continue to provide our essential services.

We are keeping our people informed and connected through regular communications and are supporting our leaders in managing dispersed teams in the current changing environment.

We continue to take advice from medical experts to shape how we manage our operations and safely deliver services to our customers during this time.

We have instructed our people who are in the field working on our physical assets to observe appropriate social distancing and hygiene protocols to safely manage interactions with customers.

We will continue to undertake planned work, as it is critical to maintaining a reliable electricity network. However, we are reviewing the amount of work we do and how we communicate with customers so we can minimise the impact of associated power interruptions.

Like everyone, this is our first experience of a pandemic. We are learning as we go and we are responding as the situation changes.

If we need to adjust or change things we will, but safety of our people and helping our community get through this pandemic are our priorities. Stay safe all.

Rob Stobbe

AER says "Energy businesses must go above and beyond to support customers doing it tough"

Last Friday, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) issued a statement calling on energy businesses to put customers first during the current global health crisis.

Launching the Statement of Expectations of energy businesses: Protecting consumers and the energy market during COVID-19 the AER has reiterated that energy is an essential service and that the energy market has an important role to play in protecting and supporting businesses and the community through the COVID-19 pandemic and our recovery.

Key AER expectations include:

- that energy retailers offer payment plans or hardship arrangements to all residential and small business customers who indicate they may be in financial stress, regardless of whether the customer meets the 'usual' criteria for that assistance;
- no disconnection of any residential or small business customers who may be in financial stress (without their agreement) before 31 July 2020 and potentially beyond;
- deferring referrals of customers to debt collection agencies for recovery actions, or credit default listing until at least 31 July 2020; and
- waiving disconnection, reconnection and/or contract break fees for small businesses that have ceased operation, along with daily supply charges to retailers, during any period of disconnection until at least 31 July 2020.

You can read the full media release here.

Vulnerable customers in our community - how we are responding

We understand that while this is a challenging time for all South Australians, the COVID-19 situation places some members of our community under additional health and financial stress. In line with our recently developed Vulnerable Customer Strategy, we are looking at quickly progressing a number of initiatives to help vulnerable customers over the next few months, whilst ensuring we maintain an essential service to the community. These initiatives include:

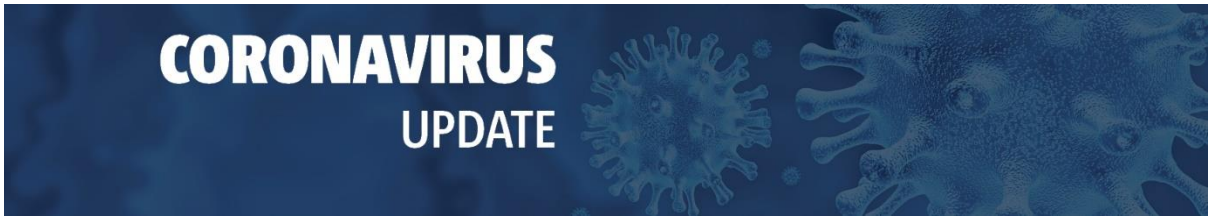
- Providing customer information and education regarding reducing consumption and energy efficiency whilst working from home
- Playing an advocacy role with retailers
- Providing information on our website regarding our response to provide certainty to customers and information/ links on assistance available for vulnerable customers

- Investigating our approach to planned work and communication on outage times
- Working with our consultative groups to investigate other possible options and initiatives to help vulnerable customers
- Providing advice to customers who have stockpiled supplies in the case of unplanned outages
- Implementing a number of changes to our working practices so we can safely maintain our services

Rest assured, our engagement with our customers and stakeholders remains very important to us, and we will keep in touch with you in the coming months. We are also exploring other alternatives such as webinars, webex and other options we can use to keep the lines of communication open.

In the meantime, please keep in touch by contacting the team at talkingpower@sapowernetworks.com.au. We ask you all to take care of yourselves and your loved ones and stay safe.

New one stop shop for community engagement and information



We recognise you are probably experiencing information right now with various emails, media broadcasts, radio announcements and news stories regarding business and the country's response to COVID-19. To help you, we have developed a dedicated place on our Talking Power website for all SA Power Networks' Coronavirus information, including a comprehensive set of FAQs. We will continue to build this information as we go, but in the meantime, we hope that this helps you to stay informed about our response.

Links that we've found helpful lately include:



[Talking to kids about scary stuff in the news]

[SA Health Latest Updates - COVID-19]

[SA Health Info on COVID-19 for the Community]

[Our Learning SA - continued learning between school and home]

[Beyond Blue - looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak]

COVID-19 hotline and gateway - a dedicated State information hotline is now available to South Australians and will provide local information on COVID-19 (available 8am-8pm seven days a week): **1800 253 787.**

A COVID-19 gateway, linking to relevant information on state and federal government websites, has also been established: www.sa.gov.au/covid-19.

If you have any questions about this newsletter or want to provide additional feedback, please email us on talkingpower@sapowernetworks.com.au and we will contact you. Click to view the full grievance policy.

Kind regards,

The Stakeholder Engagement Team

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