

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Suburban Development



Tuesday, 14 August, 2018

POWERLINE BUSHFIRE SAFETY ROLLOUT CONTINUES

The Andrews Labor Government is providing \$10 million in grants to continue the rollout of technology that will help prevent bushfires caused by powerline faults.

Minister for Energy Lily D'Ambrosio today announced non-government high voltage customers will be eligible for grants of up to \$250,000 per site under the High Voltage Customer Assistance Program (HCAP).

These grants will assist in the rollout of Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiter (REFCL) technology on high voltage powerlines by modifying electrical equipment to make it ready for REFCL operation.

High voltage businesses require substantial electricity to operate and are connected directly to high voltage distribution networks run by electricity companies. There are over 90 of these sites around Victoria.

REFCLs rapidly reduce the flow of electricity to wires that fall into contact with the ground or vegetation, preventing bushfires and reducing unnecessary power outages.

The Essential Services Commission this week amended Victoria's Electricity Distribution Code, making it clear that high voltage customers are responsible for taking reasonable measures to protect their equipment.

The initiative is part of the Labor Government's work to implement the recommendations of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and the Powerline Bushfire Safety Taskforce.

Applications for the High Voltage Customer Assistance Program will be open until 20 February 2019. For more information visit energy.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're taking action to reduce the risk of bushfires and protect communities across Victoria."

"REFCLs reduce the risk of fire from a fault on high voltage powerlines by up to 60 per cent – that's why we're making this significant investment."