

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Monday, 10 August 2020

BOOSTING POWERLINE BUSHFIRE SAFETY

The Victorian Government is continuing to improve community resilience against bushfires through the Powerline Bushfire Safety Program - which is reducing the risk of fires started by high voltage electricity lines across the state by up to 60 per cent.

The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio today announced \$7 million for the nation leading safety program – ensuring Victorians will continue to be protected by the latest and best technology.

The \$750 million Powerline Bushfire Safety Program is Australia's largest powerline safety project – delivering safer communities that are more resilient against bushfire.

Last summer alone, 33 potentially catastrophic bushfire starts were avoided thanks to the program.

Thanks to the program Victoria's entire 30,000 kilometre single wire earth return network is now protected by Automatic Circuit Reclosers to stop fires from starting – helping deliver a greater than 32 per cent reduction in relative powerline bushfire risk across the state's electricity network.

The funding includes \$2 million being invested in the Government's Powerline Bushfire Safety Program Research and Development Grants Fund to investigate and deliver new powerline safety technologies.

The funding also includes a new \$5 million to replace bare-wire private overhead powerlines in Victoria's highest-risk bushfires areas.

The Private Overhead Electric Line (POEL) Scheme will open on 15 September to eligible residents across bushfire-affected areas.

Applications for the Research and Development Fund Grants are open until Monday 5 October 2020.

For more information and to access the Powerline Bushfire Safety Program Progress Report documenting the program's implementation of recommendations 27 and 32 from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission into the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, visit: energy.vic.gov.au

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

"We're continuing to invest in the development of new technologies that will help keep Victorians safe – ensuring we continue to lead the nation now and into the future."

"Community safety is our top priority – we're putting people first by reducing the risk of bushfires."

"We're building community resilience and safety as we face the impact of climate change and see hotter summers with longer bushfire seasons."