

## 6.2.10 Response to Petition - Power Generator Provision Upper Beaconsfield

**Responsible GM:** Debbie Tyson  
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### Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that;

- Council note the petition and thanks the residents for their engagement in community emergency preparedness.
- Council note the response of the Emergency Management team regarding relief provision in the event of an emergency event as per the Cardinia Shire Municipal Relief and Recovery Sub Plan
- Council and Community advocate to the Victorian Government for the inclusion of more Cardinia Shire Townships in the Energy Resilience Systems Program lead by DEECA.

### Attachments

1. Petition for generators to be reinstalled in Beaconsfield Upper for fire season 407135 [6.2.10.1 - 11 pages]

### Executive Summary

In October 2023, Council received a petition from residents regarding the provision of emergency power generators in the township of Upper Beaconsfield. This was tabled at the November Meeting of Council. Council requested a response from the relevant Council Department.

As per the SEMP, Council's role in an emergency is to coordinate local relief and recovery response with DEECA as the control agency for energy disruption. Council will meet this requirement using the most appropriate buildings and resources available including the provision of temporary generators as required. Costs related to these activities are claimable under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DFRA). For detailed information regarding the relief and recovery arrangements within the Cardinia Shire.

DEECA as the responsible agency for power related emergencies are the lead for Victoria Government Energy Resilience Systems Program, implemented after the 2021 storms. It is recommended that Council and community, advocate for the inclusion of additional Cardinia Shire townships in this program.

Council Officers also commend the engagement of residents with this issue and their commitment to local community preparedness.

### Background

#### State Emergency Management Framework - Energy Disruption

Under the SEMP, DEECA is the control agency for major emergencies involving electricity, gas or liquid fuel emergencies. Activation of DEECA energy response arrangements occurs when one or more of the triggers in the SEMP are met or exceeded.

As the operator of the electricity and gas systems and markets in Victoria, AEMO has a range of powers to intervene in energy markets to respond to risks to the security of energy supply and may utilise load shedding and gas curtailment. During an energy emergency, AEMO provides expert

advice to DEECA about electricity and gas supply disruption; and coordinates and directs the gas and/or electricity industries to respond.

As the safety regulator of electricity, gas and pipelines, ESV provides safety and technical advice, including technical specialists to lead investigations, and to exercise emergency powers to make safe an emergency.

Services, businesses, and industry that depend upon power, gas and liquid fuel are responsible for enacting their business continuity plans. Under the SEMP, other government departments (Department of Government Services, Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, and Department of Transport and Planning) have key roles to support critical infrastructure owners and operators for potential or actual major energy emergencies and the upstream or downstream dependencies disrupted. These government departments provide information on sector impacts to DEECA who coordinates restoration to inform planning for and delivery of sector-specific support and relief.

As the owners and operators of energy infrastructure and supply chains, the energy industry has the primary responsibility to respond to energy supply disruption and deliver repairs, restoration, and reconnection to Victoria. The energy industry also provides subject matter experts to advise and support DEECA during major emergencies through the Energy - Emergency Management Liaison Officer.

All critical infrastructure, community assets and essential services rely on energy supply for ongoing delivery of their services to community. Interruption to energy supply can cause cascading effects, across multiple sectors simultaneously. These interdependencies between essential service sectors are a risk multiplier.

In the event of an energy disruption, the owners/operators of critical infrastructure, community assets and essential services implement their continuity and contingency plans. These sectors rely on timely and reliable information about the extent and expected duration of energy disruption to inform implementation of these plans. Council receives this information via established emergency management networks during emergencies.

DEECA as control agency and electricity businesses as the primary risk owners encourage households to include measures on what to do during power outages, which can be built into your emergency plan for fire, flood and storm. This is primary mitigation undertaken to prepare individual households. More information can be found on their website - [Power outages \(energy.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/power-outages)

### **Response During an Emergency**

During an energy emergency such as a power outage, Relief and Recovery services are delivered as per the business-as-usual arrangements under the SEMP. Specific roles and responsibilities for delivery of relief services and coordination are set out in SEMP Relief Roles and Responsibilities. Tiers of relief co-ordination are assigned as follows:

- Emergency Recovery Victoria performs the role of state relief coordinator and is supported by a range of organisations.
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing are responsible for regional relief coordination State Emergency Management Framework - Energy Disruption

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- Emergency Recovery Victoria performs the role of state relief coordinator and is supported by a range of organisations.
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing are responsible for regional relief coordination.
- Municipal Councils coordinate relief at local government level and establish relief centres or community hubs at the request of the Incident Controller.

Cardinia Shire Council provides relief provision as required by the particular emergency, using the most appropriate buildings and resources available. This would include the provision of temporary power if required. However, it must be noted that in selecting the most appropriate building for use in support of any relief response, it may be necessary to operate outside a directly impacted community to ensure the safety of Council Staff and other relief personnel. For detailed information regarding the relief and recovery arrangements within the Cardinia Shire, please see the Cardinia Shire Relief and Recovery Sub Plan.

### **Cardinia Shire Context**

Cardinia Shire has a long history of major emergencies including those that have resulted in significant prolonged power outages, in particular the dual storm events of June and October 2021. These events resulted in significant power outages for the townships of Emerald, Cockatoo, Gembrook and Tynong North.

In response to these events, DEECA and the Minister for Energy commissioned the Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review with an Expert Panel appointed to provide recommendations as to how the resilience of the network and the response to prolonged outages could be improved.

A key recommendation of this review was the establishment of The Energy Resilience Systems Program. This program has funded the installation of solar panels, batteries, and backup generators at 23 community buildings located in areas at high-risk of storm or bushfire-related power outages. The community buildings will act as hubs for the local community, providing a space to cook meals, charge devices and find information.

Due to advocacy from several Council departments, three sites in the Cardinia Shire were selected for participation in this program. These were Worrell Reserve Pavilion Emerald, Gembrook Community Centre and Cockatoo Community Complex. Please note, DEECA made all decisions in relation to which townships were selected. Council could only advocate on behalf of communities. It should be noted that these buildings will also provide support to the residents of surrounding communities not currently included in the program.

### **Policy Implications**

The position outlined is a continuation of Council's existing policy position.

### **Relevance to Council Plan**

1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected, and resilient.

1.1.5 Work closely with the community to deliver programs that build community resilience, relating to a pandemic or other disasters.

2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places.

2.1.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

### **Climate Emergency Consideration**

It is noted that that climate change will increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters, however this is already considered as part of Council's current policy position.

### **Consultation/Communication**

Extensive consultation and assurance with Emergency Service Organisations and local Community Groups and Members is conducted for all Cardinia Shire Emergency Management Plans and Policies. For more information regarding the consultation and endorsement process please see the Cardinia Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

### **Risk Assessment**

Council's Emergency Management Plans and Policies are completed under the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process as described in the Cardinia Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The continuation of Council's current policy regarding temporary power generators for use in emergencies is funded under the Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements between Local, States and the Federal Government. These arrangements result in the majority of costs incurred being claimable by Council with reimbursement from the State and Federal Governments.

Cost related to the installation of fixed emergency power systems at the current three sites selected as part of the Energy Resilience Systems Program are provided by the Victoria State Government. With any ongoing maintenance costs cover by Council within existing budgets.

The installation of any additional fixed systems outside of this program has not been scoped and would come at significant unbudgeted costs to Council. Further detailed planning would be required before any cost estimate could be provided to Council

### **Conclusion**

The Cardinia Shire has long history of major emergencies, including significant power disruption. It is important that all stakeholders, government, service providers and community do their part to prepare for these events. Council Officers commend the engagement of residents with this issue and their commitment to local community preparedness.

It is recommended by Council Officers that Council note the petition and thank the residents for their engagement in community emergency preparedness. That Council note the response of the Emergency Management team regarding relief response in the event of an emergency event. That Council and Community advocate for the inclusion of more Cardinia Shire Townships in the Energy Resilience Systems Program lead by DEECA.