SINGLE INDUSTRY SPOKESPERSON PROTOCOL FOR ELECTRICITY IN VICTORIA

PREPARED BY: AEMO Public Affairs

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Approved for distribution and use by:

APPROVED BY: Stuart Allott

TITLE: Group Manager, Media and Corporate Communications

VERSION RELEASE HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Summary of Changes
1.3	January 2019	Minor amendments to include agreement between Vic gov and Vic distribution businesses

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This document contains relevant procedures, policies, roles, responsibilities, contact details and draft media materials for the Victorian electricity supply industry, in the event that the Single Industry Spokesperson (SIS) Protocol is evoked during an electricity supply incident.

2. BACKGROUND

Victorian electricity distribution and transmission network service providers manage the majority of media relations for their individual day-to-day business and network-related issues in Victoria.

However the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has a specified leadership media relations role under the terms of its Power System Emergency Management Plan (PSEMP) when a Level 4 electricity supply emergency has been declared.

The definition of a Level 4 electricity supply emergency is an event whereby the impact of this incident goes well beyond a single industry participant or jurisdiction. The overall system integrity is being impacted and requires a coordinated response of multiple industry participants.

Characteristics of a Level 4 electricity supply emergency could include:

- A threat to public safety as power supply is significantly disrupted.
- Disruption to power supply (load shedding) being current, required or forecast for the near term.
- Multiple NEM participants impacted.
- The event has cross-jurisdictional impact.
- Potential for, or actual serious business continuity and commercial impact.

All Power System Emergency Response Level definitions can be found in Attachment 1.

The Victorian Government has requested that in addition to these circumstances, an agreement be established whereby AEMO is authorised to speak publicly on behalf of the Victorian electricity supply industry in the event of widespread and prolonged multijurisdictional electricity outages affecting the state. This will ensure that a single, consistent state-wide event description is readily available to the media.

In response to this request, AEMO consulted with Victorian distribution network service providers (DNSPs) to establish a protocol which covers:

- The process and triggers for the deployment and de-escalation of the SIS Protocol for Electricity in Victoria.
- The basis of key messaging to be communicated by the SIS Protocol for Electricity in Victoria.
- The processes of information exchange and decision-making to apply in the event of an electricity supply emergency.

3. OBJECTIVES

The SIS Protocol for Electricity in Victoria is designed to ensure media, customers, and the general public receive coordinated and timely responses that communicate the agreed key messages and give clear advice about the status of a widespread electricity emergency.

4. CRITERIA FOR ACTIVATING THE SIS PROTOCOL FOR ELECTRICITY IN VICTORIA

This protocol only applies to major, widespread distribution-level electricity supply shortages in Victoria, as detailed in the criteria and response process below. Activation of the SIS Protocol for Electricity in Victoria will be immediately considered if one or more of the following circumstances have occurred.

- Two or more separate DNSPs are affected. It is important to note, CitiPower and Powercor share one media spokesperson and therefore if solely both these regions are impacted, the SIS will not be considered.
- More than 100,000 customers across the Melbourne metropolitan area are affected by electricity
- supply outages.
- Prospect of lengthy restoration (>24 hours) affecting large number of customers.
- Prolonged call centre delays.

In the event of a power outage affecting less than 100,000 Victorian customers, Distribution Network System Providers will continue to undertake adequate and supportive communication to customers. Refer to Section 12, page seven for a summary of their committed communications.

5. PROCESS FOR ASSESSING ACTIVATION OF THE SIS PROTOCOL FOR ELECTRICITY IN VICTORIA

The process of invoking the SIS Protocol will be undertaken separately from the process of operational liaison during emergencies currently being managed by AEMO Emergency and Security Services.

The decision to activate the SIS Protocol will be the responsibility of AEMO's Media and Corporate Affairs (MCA) department, in consultation with DNSP corporate affairs managers and representatives of the Victorian Government.

Activation of the SIS Protocol will be considered at the AEMO-led communications teleconference which should be attended by all of the aforementioned stakeholders. The purpose of the communications teleconference is to discuss key messages, media strategies and actions as part of an agreed and coordinated communications approach between AEMO, industry and government.

The communications teleconference will normally follow the AEMO-led operational teleconference briefing. The AEMO operational teleconference briefing is separate to the communications teleconference in that it seeks to clarify the extent of likely or actual electricity supply issues, the number of customers and/or regions affected, and operational strategies by the affected DNSPs.

While the operational teleconference briefing serves a different function and stands distinct from the communications teleconference, it provides the context, critical information, and likely outcomes of an electricity supply emergency, which should be relayed and discussed during the communications teleconference to assess the need for activating the SIS Protocol.

The SIS Protocol response process can only be activated if the above criteria have occurred, and if there is universal agreement that the activation is in the best interests of Victorian electricity consumers.

If extreme weather increases the likelihood of widespread electricity supply shortages, the SIS Protocol can be activated before any shortages occur. In such cases, DNSPs, Energy Safe Victoria

(ESV) and AEMO, in liaison with the Victorian Government, will review the situation on an ongoing basis and ensure stakeholders are kept informed. If there are significant community concerns arising from the event, all parties will promote the industry safety messages led by ESV (see Attachment 3).

6. PROCESS FOR ACTIVATING THE SIS PROTOCOL FOR ELECTRICITY IN VICTORIA

If representatives (outlined in Section 9 of this protocol) of the DNSPs, AEMO, ESV and the Victorian Government agree the SIS Protocol criteria have been met, the following will occur:

- Formally activate the SIS Protocol following universal agreement by all parties.
- AEMO to notify all relevant parties that the SIS Protocol has been activated.
- In its role as the SIS, AEMO will develop a holding / proactive media statement for the SIS, and gain alignment/approval from all industry and government representatives. A template media statement for this purpose can be found in Attachment 2.
- Establish a coordinated process and timeframe for ongoing consultations under the SIS Protocol.

7. PROCESS FOR PROVIDING THE CONTENT OF SIS MESSAGES

The SIS Protocol ensures all media messages and information are aligned. When required, media releases will be supported by DNSPs information (i.e. outage numbers / key regions impacted). The key communications messages and responsibilities are outlined below. When invoked, AEMO will provide the media with:

- Aggregated numbers of affected customers.
- Overview of areas / regions most affected.
- Cause/s of incident.
- Broad expectations regarding restoration.
- General description regarding the event (e.g. 1-in-100-year event).
- Safety messages.
- Referrals to individual DNSPs for more specific information about individual events and responses. It is preferred that AEMO does not mention individual DNSPs, however some leeway is appropriate in the context of live media interviews.

DNSPs will provide media with any or all of the following:

- Detail in relation to local network-specific information.
- Detail about the local regions affected, including numbers of affected customers.
- Cause of individual, localised incidents or supply shortages.
- Expectations regarding restoration of supply.
- Safety messages.

8. COORDINATION OF MEDIA RESPONSES WHILE THE SIS PROTOCOL IS ACTIVATED

During a major event, AEMO will liaise with industry and government (as required) to ensure consistency of messages and information flow to the public. AEMO and DNSPs have specific responsibilities under the SIS Protocol:

- AEMO will manage major state-wide media. DNSPs should continue to manage local and regional media communications.
- AEMO will have the power to refer media enquiries back to DNSPs if the subject or volume of media enquiries requires their assistance. The DNSPs must be informed of such action by AEMO.
- Activation of the SIS Protocol does not preclude DNSPs from engaging with major media outlets about the event, if and when asked to do so.
- AEMO will ensure DNSPs corporate affairs managers are kept informed about the number, source and status of major media enquiries, and will seek prior agreement if there is a need to hold any media conferences.
- AEMO will provide DNSPs copies of media releases prior to them being distributed to the media.
- In addition to the communications teleconferences, the DNSPs corporate affairs managers will keep AEMO informed of any significant developments or changes in the situation, normally on an hourly basis, unless otherwise agreed.

9. PROCESS FOR DEACTIVATING THE SIS PROTOCOL

DNSPs and AEMO should agree to deactivate the SIS Protocol when the event reaches a point where any one of the following criteria is satisfied:

- Only one DNSP remains significantly affected.
- The number of customers off supply has greatly reduced.
- The likelihood of large numbers of customers remaining off supply for a prolonged period has decreased.
- Media interest has greatly reduced.

This decision will be promptly communicated to all key stakeholders.

10. NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES

The nominated representatives are the authorised corporate affairs managers of the following organisations:

- AEMO
- CitiPower and Powercor Australia
- AusNet Services
- Jemena
- United Energy
- ESV
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

The parties will ensure that current contact details are known to others at all times.

11. SIS PROTOCOL REVIEW

The parties and DELWP will convene within a week of deactivating the SIS Protocol to review all aspects of the process and outcomes of the event. The parties and DELWP will meet annually to review the operation of the process and the terms of the protocol.

12. CUSTOMER OUTAGE COMMUNICATIONS FOR LESS THAN 100,000 AFFECTED CUSTOMERS.

Distribution Network System Providers (DNSP) are committed to informing customers of a power outage even if there are less than 100,000 affected customers.

- There are varying levels of criticality and a range of causes which can create a power outage. This will therefore determine the degree and frequency of communications decided by the appropriate DNSP.
- DNSP's have committed to informing customers if a power outage occurs through the channels in the table below.
- Depending on the nature of a power outage, the SISP can still be activated if necessary.

Table 1 Customer outage communications actioned by Distribution Network System Providers

Communication Type	AusNet Service	Citipower Powercor	Jemena	United Energy
Call centre & Interactive voice response	*	*	*	*
Website	*	*	*	*
SMS advice	*	*	*	*
Mobile application	*	*		
Social media	*	*	*	*
Website chat				
Email advice	*			
Proactive communication		*	*	*

ATTACHMENT 1. POWER SYSTEM EMERGENCY RESPONSE LEVEL DEFINITIONS

4 Power System Emergency Response Levels

The following table summarises the emergency response levels:

POWER SYSTEM EMERGENCY RESPONSE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE CONTROLLER	AEMO ENGAGEMENT
1	Operational incident	Local resources. No additional assistance	No
2	Local emergency	Local resources. May escalate to level 3	No
3	Widespread emergency	Affected NEM participant. Mobilises its emergency response plans	Dependant on nature of incident
4	AEMO coordinated - cross-jurisdictional impact and affecting market security	AEMO	Yes
5	Jurisdictional direction	Jurisdiction or AEMO	Yes

Note:

The power system emergency response levels have no relationship to the "lack of reserve" levels as defined in the NEM Rules. Lack of reserve levels are a signal to the electricity market and do not constitute an emergency situation. To avoid confusion reference to these two sets of levels include the relevant phrase 'power system emergency response level' or 'lack of reserve level'.

The five power system emergency response levels are described in more detail below.

MEDIA RELEASE

[DATE]

ATTACHMENT 2: AEMO media release under SIS Protocol (electricity)

<<CAUSE>> CAUSES ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS ACROSS VICTORIA

Victoria's electricity distribution businesses and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) advise that [a/a series of] electricity supply interruption[s] [has/have] occurred across Victoria, affecting customers across the state.

This is as a result of <<INSERT CAUSE>>.

At present, approximately <<INSERT TOTAL NUMBERS OFF SUPPLY>> Victorian customers are affected by power outages as a result of electricity supply disruptions.

The major areas affected are <<INSERT MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED>>.

<<INSERT ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION EG RESTORATION TIMEFRAME>>

AEMO, as the national power system operator, will continue to provide media with a state-wide overview of the situation on behalf of the Victorian electricity supply industry, until conditions improve.

Media requests for high level, summary information about the electricity supply disruption, or interviews, should be directed to AEMO.

Media inquiries regarding specific power outages or areas affected should be directed to the appropriate electricity distribution business listed below.

Electricity safety matters should be directed to Energy Safe Victoria.

ENDS

For more information: AEMO Media **I** Mobile: 0409 382 121 **I** Email: media@aemo.com.au **I**

For region or area-specific media enquiries, please contact:

AusNet Services (Outer east and outer northern Melbourne, eastern and north-eastern Victoria) 03 9483 0989

CitiPower and Powercor Australia (Melbourne CBD and inner suburbs, outer western suburbs, and central and western Victoria) 03 9683 4342

Jemena (North-west Melbourne) 1300 331 239

United Energy (South-east Melbourne, and Mornington Peninsula) 03 8846 9998, mediaenquiries@ue.com.au

For electricity safety-related media enquiries, please contact:

Jonathan Granger 0400 948 934, jonathan.granger@energysafe.vic.gov.au

About AEMO:

AEMO is responsible for operating Australia's largest gas and electricity markets and power systems, including the National Electricity Market and interconnected power system in Australia's eastern and south-eastern seaboard, and the Wholesale Electricity Market and power system in Western Australia.

AEMO also operates the Victorian Declared Wholesale Gas Market and the Victorian gas transmission system; the wholesale gas Short Term Trading Market hubs in Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane; the Wallumbilla Gas Supply Hub in Queensland; and the Moomba Gas Supply Hub in South Australia.

As Australia's independent energy markets and power systems operator, AEMO provides critical planning, forecasting and power systems security advice and services to deliver energy security for all Australians. For more information, head to ***www.aemo.com.au***

Media Release

Energy Safe Victoria

ATTACHMENT 3. Energy Safe Victoria media release (electricity)

[Date]

URGENT SAFETY MESSAGES FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DUE TO STORMS OR OTHER EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Electricity safety regulator, Energy Safe Victoria, provides the following advice for households who remain without power following extreme weather events.

- If supplies have not been restored to homes, householders must not connect generators or perform other electrical work around the home. Such practice is both illegal and dangerous. Electrical work can only be carried out by licensed electricians.
- Households still without power after electricity supply has been restored should seek the help of their network provider. The problem could be a fault in the supply line to the property, or a fault within the property's electrical installation.
- If there are continuing power supply problems within properties, an electrician licensed by Energy Safe Victoria must be engaged to perform any electrical repair work. Contact a registered electrical contractor. A list of electricians can be found on the ESV 'Find A Tradie' tool on our website.
- When there is a power cut, make sure heating and cooling appliances are turned off (there is a risk of fire if they come back on and there is no one at the property,).
- Where properties have been significantly damaged by storms, it is imperative that checks of wiring and other electrical installations are made before appliances are connected and turned on. Such checks must be carried out by a licensed electrician or licensed electrical inspector.
- Do not use any electrical appliances following storms or floods until they have been checked for safety by a licensed electrician. Do not expect them to work safely once they have dried out.

OTHER IMPORTANT ADVICE DURING WIND STORMS

- When outdoors keep clear of fallen power lines and make sure others do the same. They could be "live" and dangerous.
- Keep people, particularly children, away from floodwaters in case there is live electrical wiring in or around the water.

In the case of emergencies, household are advised to contact their network provider. Relevant contact details can be found on electricity bills or on the ESV website: www.esv.vic.gov.au/safety-education/emergencies/

Media contact: Jonathan Granger 0400 948 934 | jonathan.granger@energysafe.vic.gov.au