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Lower Costs and Customer Choice Drives New Network Proposals

Victorian electricity customers will experience reduced network charges as early as 2016 under new regulatory proposals lodged by the Victorian distribution businesses.

The proposals, lodged by the five distribution businesses servicing Victorian electricity customers will provide decreases in network charges of up to \$138 in some areas.

Energy Networks Association CEO, John Bradley, said that the proposals have been developed after extensive consumer consultation, engaging in new ways to receive important feedback on the priorities of electricity customers.

“Electricity affordability is a key issue for electricity customers, but the evidence is that they are not prepared to compromise the safe and reliable delivery of electricity.

“An important feature of the proposals allows Victorian businesses to maintain essential investment in network services, such as bushfire risk mitigation, vegetation management, responses to outages and inspections and maintenance.

Mr Bradley said that the proposals lodged yesterday also seek to find the balance between costs, and the need to maintain aging infrastructure, enable consumer choice, innovative service delivery and the deployment of technology and demand management.

“Customer use of energy is changing, and a clear priority for customers is to access the tools to better understand and manage their energy consumption, through technology, real time information, and access to embedded generation, including residential solar.

“Victorian network businesses are offering a clear plan for building the networks of the future - delivering the services that customers want and keeping costs down.

“These proposals are particularly significant given the cost of standard network services fell by 24% in the last 18 years.

“It is also a timely reminder that gap between the most expensive and cheapest retail market offer in Victoria is the worst in Australia.

“Combined with shopping around to get the best retail deal, these network proposals represent the best opportunity for Victorian electricity customers to see real decreases in their bills over the next 5 years,” Mr Bradley said.

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ENA is the peak national body for Australia’s energy networks; and represents gas distribution and electricity network businesses on economic, technical, environment and safety regulation as well as national energy policy issues.