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POWERCOR CONTINUES RESTORATION EFFORTS AS MORE STORMS LOOM FOR VICTORIA

Powercor has restored power supplies to all but 1,100 customers throughout Central and Western Victoria impacted by last night's severe storms and is gearing up for the possibility of new power outages as the unstable weather continues.

Powercor crews have worked tirelessly to repair electricity supplies over the past 24 hours after more than 40,000 customers lost power. Causes for the power interruptions have included lightning strikes, high winds and debris flying across power lines.

All available field resources are currently tending to a series of faults ranging from blown fuses to damaged transformers which are spread out over a broad geographic area.

Parts of the Powercor network still experiencing problems include Ararat, Stawell, Castlemaine, Echuca and Kyneton.

As crews reach their maximum allowable hours working in the field they will be replaced by fresh resources. Many lineworkers are due to start work again at 3pm today and will be available to tend to faults until the early hours of tomorrow morning.

Powercor's Network Control & Operations Manager, Chris Annett, said efforts would continue to restore a large number of single premise outages, with top priority given to customers who have been without power the longest.

"We are working as safely and quickly as possible to restore power to all of our customers," Mr Annett said.

"While we've made significant progress in recovering the electricity network after last night's storm we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

"We will closely monitor the changing weather patterns and be ready to respond should more widespread outages occur today.

"The patience of our customers' is sincerely appreciated as we continue to work through the backlog of faults," Mr Annett said.

Powercor is presently finalising its plans to ensure the necessary field resources and electrical equipment is available to repair any new system faults.

Present indications are that the storm will hit Melbourne from 3pm with severe winds continuing until 8pm tonight.

"We anticipate today's storm activity will not be as significant as yesterday's, but Powercor crews remain in a state of readiness should more damage be incurred." he said.

MEDIA RELEASE

TIPS FOR CUSTOMERS ON PREPARING FOR STORMS

During storms there is no possible way of giving customers advance warning of an impending outage. So if the weather is bad you should make simple steps to lessen the impact, including:

- Identify Powercor's Faults Response telephone contact number, **13 24 12**, and your 11 digit National Meter Identifier number (both numbers can be found on the power bill you receive from your retailer), and record these numbers in a safe place, such as on the fridge - they'll help your electricity distributor to identify you quickly and provide accurate and rapid information when you call.
- Make sure you have a battery-powered radio on hand, which you can tune in to the frequency for your local radio station - this service will provide updates during widespread emergencies.
- Ensure your mobile telephone remains charged so you can ring your electricity distributor or another authority if you need to – remember, mains operated telephones will not work during a power outage
- Keep a torch and spare batteries handy.
- If your garage door is electric, ensure you know how to open it manually
- Keep any other emergency contact numbers you may need on hand.
- If your property is flooded or in imminent danger of flooding, turn off the electricity at the main switchboard.
- If you are working with a computer, make sure you save files regularly to prevent losing any work before a power outage occurs.
- If you have a mobile phone browser or laptop with wireless broadband, visit our website for restoration updates.

Any Powercor customers still wishing to report local faults in their area today should ring the Powercor Service Difficulties and Faults line on **13 24 12**.

Media inquiries: Powercor's 24 hour media hotline on 03 9683 4342.

