



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Thursday, 6 May 2021**

### **More rooftop solar, batteries and EVs under 'Future Networks' program**

A major program supporting customers to maximise their rooftop solar and prepare the electricity networks for growing numbers of household batteries and electric vehicles will be rolled out by electricity distributors CitiPower and Powercor over the next five years.

Last Friday (30 April), the Australian Energy Regulator released its final determination on the networks' investment plans for the 2021-2026 period commencing 1 July.

The Future Networks program is one of the most critical initiatives approved by the determination. It incorporates a dedicated solar enablement initiative and the expansion of the network's digital capability to facilitate a variety of choices for customers.

CitiPower and Powercor General Manager, Electricity Networks, Mark Clarke, said the program will support customers to connect more solar, batteries and EVs, lower their power bills and reduce their environmental footprint.

"The energy market is changing rapidly, and we are developing the network and our systems to enable this," Mr Clarke said.

"Our investments will ensure 85% of solar customers are able to export into our network 85% of the time.

"We will also develop the network to allow electric vehicles to be charged and eventually be another source of exports. The announcement this week that the Victorian Government will incentivise people to buy electric vehicles underlines the importance of these investments."

On average this year, 70 customers have connected rooftop solar in the Powercor network every day, bringing the total number of households with solar to 155,000 - or 20% of Powercor customers. Forecasts for the next five years predict that the number of Powercor customers with solar will increase to more than 30%. In CitiPower, almost 500 new residential rooftop solar systems were connected in the first quarter of 2021. This brings the total number of households with solar in CitiPower to almost 15,000 with this number expected to increase significantly over the next five years.

The digital program will prepare the network for more distributed energy resources (DER) including demand management initiatives that support customers' energy efficiency and emerging virtual power plant projects and community level batteries.

"We are building sophisticated systems internally to make sure all forms of DER are supported by our network while we also maintain power reliability and quality for all customers," Mr Clarke said.

The solar enablement program will use traditional approaches such as capital upgrades as well as technology such as our dynamic voltage management system to facilitate more solar and exports.

This follows the success of the Solar Hotspots program announced in March to alleviate capacity constraints in areas with some of the highest solar penetration across the Powercor network. More than 70% of the fieldwork is complete and by June is expected to realise benefits for more than 50,000 solar customers in nine targeted regions.

**For media inquiries, please contact CitiPower and Powercor's media line on (03) 9683 4342.**



As regulated businesses, CitiPower and Powercor's proposed investments, pricing plans and rate of return are approved by the AER every five years and this determines the revenue able to be recovered from customers.

For more information about the work to support customers get the most out of their solar, visit <https://www.powercor.com.au/major-projects/solar-hotspots/>.

**ENDS**

### **About CitiPower and Powercor**

CitiPower and Powercor move electricity to and from more than 1.1 million homes and businesses across the western suburbs of Melbourne, central and western Victoria, Melbourne's CBD and inner suburbs.

We are playing a critical role in enabling Victoria's clean energy transition. More than 1765MW of solar, wind and other renewable generation is connected to the Powercor network, which is home to four of Victoria's Renewable Energy Zones, while more than 67MW of solar generation is connected to the CitiPower network

CitiPower and Powercor are at the forefront of finding innovative ways to support Victoria's energy transition through projects and trials investigating community batteries, smart charging for electric vehicles, and microgrids and other community energy projects.

The Powercor network is made up of almost 90,000 kilometres of wires and more than 588,000 poles and associated infrastructure, and supports 11,200 medium, commercial and industrial businesses and 106,500 small businesses. The CitiPower network comprises almost 7600 kilometres of wires and more than 57,000 poles and associated infrastructure, and has the highest customer density in the National Electricity Market with 107 customers per kilometre square.

Our teams operate from 14 depots, our Bendigo-based customer contact centre and our CBD headquarters, to deliver reliable, safe and affordable electricity by operating, managing and maintaining all network assets and metering services. This means managing a network that is reliable and safe, particularly in relation to bushfire risks.

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