

Monday, 27 February 2023

## **New battery launched to support more solar in Melbourne's western suburbs**

The first of what is expected to be many neighbourhood batteries installed on the Powercor electricity distribution network has been unveiled today in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Powercor Chief Executive Officer Tim Rourke and Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio visited Gleneagles Avenue Park in Tarneit to mark the completion of the battery and artwork.

Charged by both network electricity and local rooftop solar generation, the 120kW/360kWh battery will supply about 170 nearby homes for up to 3 hours during peak electricity demand periods.

The \$1.3 million battery received \$800,000 funding from the Victorian Government's Neighbourhood Battery Initiative (NBI) and planning support from Wyndham City Council.

Mr Rourke said batteries will support Powercor continue to provide reliable, safe and affordable power to homes and businesses in a clean energy future.

"Batteries are essential for the role we play in operating the electricity distribution system within a rapidly changing environment and are helping us integrate more and more renewable energy into our networks," Mr Rourke said.

In 2022, there was a 10% increase in the number of homes in Powercor's network with rooftop solar. This now means around one in four, or 190,000 homes in Powercor's network have rooftop solar.

"In Tarneit and the surrounding suburbs, almost one in two homes has rooftop solar, making this an ideal location for our first neighbourhood battery on the Powercor network," Mr Rourke said.

When operating, the battery will soak up excess solar from nearby homes and share the power when it's needed most. It will help all local customers, not just those with solar panels, to benefit from having more renewable generation available.

"As more Victorians choose to electrify their homes, we expect batteries will become important assets on our network to support peak demand for power," Mr Rourke said.

"Batteries are also providing us a solution to supporting growing communities and solar connections, without the high cost of network upgrades."

Powercor hosted several information sessions and community events with local residents and conducted a survey to understand what style of artwork they wanted on the battery and electrical kiosk.

An artist, called 23<sup>rd</sup> Key, was selected to develop and paint the battery and transformer kiosk. The designs focus on the natural environment, depicting local flora and wildlife.

A recent study, *The Powerful Neighbours Report*, led by Powercor in collaboration with local councils and other organisations and funded through the Victorian Government's NBI, found that demand for action on carbon emissions reduction and climate change are the top reasons why both urban and regional communities are calling for neighbourhood batteries as part of their electricity distribution networks.

"Batteries are playing a key role in how we operate our networks and we will continue working with community groups and all levels of government to identify the most feasible sites for future batteries," Mr Rourke said.

Powercor is also working with electricity retailer Simply Energy to develop and trial new products that will provide more benefits to the community.

More information about the Tarneit neighbourhood battery and how it works is available at [Tarneit neighbourhood battery | CitiPower Powercor](#)

**END**

### **About Powercor**

Powercor moves electricity to and from more than 902,000 homes and businesses across the western suburbs of Melbourne and through central and western Victoria to the South Australian and New South Wales borders.

Our network is made up of more than 77,000 kilometres of total wires and more than 597,000 poles and associated infrastructure.

Our purpose as a Distribution System Operator is to ensure all forms of distributed energy resources – such as solar, batteries, smart appliances and electric vehicles – are integrated efficiently and flexibly in a system that benefits customers.

Powercor is playing a critical role in supporting Victoria's clean energy transition. Approximately 2.4GW of solar, wind and other renewable generation is connected to our network, which is home to four of Victoria's Renewable Energy Zones. This includes around 190,000 homes which have connected rooftop solar.

We 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.

Our teams operate from 13 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.