

Victoria energy crisis: Scope for power compensation, Andrews says



Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews. Picture: Fiona Hamilton.

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Sweltering conditions have caused energy chaos across Victoria as more than 17,000 homes remain without power, blackouts expected to continue until late Monday.

But the state government has been quick to stress issues with poles, wires and substations are responsible for the outages, rather than a supply issue.

“There were distribution and localised network problems in individual neighbourhoods,” Premier Daniel Andrews said on Monday.

There were nearly 50,000 properties in Victoria without power at one point on Sunday, as temperatures hit the high 30s in Melbourne.



Hot conditions have tested the Victorian power system. Picture: Mark Stewart.

About 15,760 properties serviced by distributor United Energy's network were still without power as of 9am Monday, while 275 were without power in the CitiPower and Powercor networks and 1200 in Ausnet's network. Jemena said no outages were present in its network, but about 1050 of the properties were without power at 9:30pm on Sunday.

Mr Andrews said there could be scope for compensation.

"We are looking at all available means to compel companies to compensate people."

A spokesman for United Energy, CitiPower and Powercor said fuse faults at their substations were to blame for the majority of outages, the demand for power increasing as temperatures soared into the 40s across the state.

"The prolonged high temperatures and humidity through the weekend significantly increased electricity demand at many locations across the network," the spokesman said.



People soak up the sun at St Kilda Pier in Melbourne. Picture: AAP.

“Due to the large volume of faults, in some cases there may be extended restoration times with power in some areas likely to be affected until this evening.”

A slow-moving cool change is set to bring relief later on Monday and arrive in Melbourne sometime between 3pm and 4pm, with authorities warning the very young, elderly and chronically ill are most at risk of being affected by the conditions.

“They can’t regulate their temperature as well, (and) a lot of people don’t know that they’re getting dehydrated and they get dehydrated very quickly,” State health commander Paul Holman said.

“The homeless, people outside, just make sure if you see someone in trouble, check to see if they’re OK.

“If they need an ambulance, call triple-zero.”



People, dogs, and horses cool off at Altona dog beach after a hot night. Picture: Nicole Garmston.

Public Transport Victoria says it has been dousing swelling tram tracks with water in Melbourne and plans to implement speed restrictions for some regional train services.

The predicted cool change w

on't reach Victoria's southeast until early Tuesday while temperatures in the northeast are forecast to remain in the low 30s until Wednesday.

With AAP

Comment

Dan, forget play acting and pulling faces. Fix the underlying issues, don't deal with symptoms by offering rebates etc. This is your job and we are relying on you, Dan the Man, to fix things. There are 3 legs to power problems in Victoria. 1) Generation - not sufficient capacity to cover peak demand, increase base load capacity using "best technology" coal power 2) Distribution is not reliable, re-instate reliability engineering approaches to maintenance and compell energy companies to deliver premium service levels that match the premium energy prices now charged, regardless of their RONA targets 3) infrastructure investment - have the guts to divorce infrastructure from government. On infrastructure, my view is that Government track record isn't all that hot. Just think Desal (process is

riddled with operational problems, no one is discussing Boron levels that likely don't meet WHO recommended minimums, etc), East-West Link ("the contract's not worth the paper it's written on"!!) How dare politicians draw their salaries in the face of these mess ups!