



**THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**  
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

**THE HON ANGUS TAYLOR MP**  
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

4 November 2020

### **Telco and energy networks working together in emergencies**

Outages in vital power and telecommunications services during bushfires and other emergencies will be addressed through better coordination and communication between utilities.

The peak industry body for Australia’s energy networks and the peak body for Australia’s telecommunications industry have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to help further improve collaboration and knowledge-sharing between the two sectors to better respond to emergency situations.

Energy Networks Australia is the industry body representing Australia’s electricity transmission and distribution and gas distribution networks, while Communications Alliance develops and maintains codes, standards and guidelines for the telecommunications industry.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety, and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding and congratulated the telco and energy sectors for working collaboratively.

“Access to telecommunications is vital before, during and after an emergency, and power is critical to the functioning of telco networks” the Minister said.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Hon Angus Taylor MP said this is an important agreement between two essential service providers.

“Last summer’s devastating bushfires highlighted the importance of keeping Australian communities informed and connected during an emergency. Ensuring that Australians have access to a reliable and affordable energy supply is a top priority for the Morrison Government,” said Minister Taylor.

To view the find out more about the Memorandum of Understanding, go to the [Communications Alliance website](#).

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## **Additional information**

### **Roundtable on Telecommunications Resilience**

On 22 January 2020, Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, [convened a roundtable meeting](#) with Australia's major telecommunications companies to discuss network resilience in the bushfires. Roundtable participants agreed that access to power was critical, and identified that most network outages following the bushfires were due to loss of power, not due to direct bushfire damage to network facilities.

Participants discussed initiatives to improve network resilience in the future, including improved information sharing from the energy companies on the availability of power to enable telcos to prioritise the deployment of generators. Following that roundtable, CommsAlliance and Energy Networks Australia worked together to develop the Memorandum of Understanding, which was published on 14 October 2020.

### **Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements**

Commission Chair, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC (Retd) presented [the Royal Commission's report](#) to the Governor-General on Wednesday, 28 October 2020. The report was tabled in Parliament on Friday, 30 October 2020.

The Royal Commission report discusses the importance of critical infrastructure coordination, particularly between the telecommunications and energy providers. The report also notes that the peak bodies of both industry sectors (Communications Alliance and Energy Networks Australia) are developing guidelines aimed at improving information sharing and coordination arrangements during disasters, and encourages them in this effort (page 241 of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements report).