

## Explanatory Statement

**Project:** Understanding vulnerability among individuals with specialised support needs in the context of electricity services

**Project partners:** Yarra Energy Foundation and AusNet Services

**Chief investigator:** Lachlan Hensey  
Energy and Storage Officer, Yarra Energy Foundation  
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You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researcher via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

### What does the research involve?

This research is investigating the risks and impacts experienced by individuals with specialised support needs in regional and rural communities in the context of electricity services. Your participation in the research involves an interview of approximately 45 minutes, in which you will be asked questions about how your life and wellbeing are impacted by, for example, the price of electricity or power outages. You will receive a \$50 eGift voucher in appreciation of your contribution.

From both survey and interview data, the researchers will draw conclusions and recommendations about how AusNet can better support their customers and improve their services and communication in order to reduce risks and impacts experienced by the community, and contribute to their continued wellbeing and resilience.

### Why was I chosen for this research?

You were invited to participate as you may either live with disability or a chronic health condition, and live in the AusNet distribution network area in the eastern part of Victoria.

### Source of funding

This project is funded through the AusNet Vulnerability Research Grant 2022, which was awarded to Yarra Energy Foundation in the second half of 2022.

### Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Consent to participate in the research project is provided by completing and returning the consent form in person or via email. You have the right to opt-out or withdraw from the research before the scheduled interview, as well as any time during the course of the interview itself. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your responses once aggregated

with other responses. Additionally, with your consent (per your consent form) your responses may be used for future research, in a de-identified format.

**Possible benefits and risks to participants**

Your contribution will help to achieve better outcomes for regional communities (especially people with specialised support needs) regarding electricity services, and to reduce risks and impacts related to energy insecurity/vulnerability.

The only risk identified in this research is possible emotional disturbance talking about challenging personal experiences, if this occurs.

**Payment**

Interview participants will receive a \$50 eGift voucher in recognition of their contribution. Survey respondents will have the opportunity to enter the draw for 1 of 15 x \$50 eGift vouchers.

**Confidentiality**

All responses will be treated as anonymous and confidential. Only compiled information will be reported. Where quotations are used in the research report, participants who offer potentially identifying information will be de-identified using pseudonyms.

Following the interview, data gathered will be considered confidential and stored on a security-protected computer.

**Storage of data**

Data will be stored on a password-protected computer and password-protected Microsoft cloud storage service. Only the chief investigator will have access to the recordings and transcripts of the interviews, although de-identified data may be shared with other Yarra Energy Foundation and AusNet staff working directly on the project.

**Results**

Upon request, the chief investigator will share a summary of results and findings at the conclusion of the research project in April 2023.

**Complaints**

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the either of the following:

**Tim Shue**

Chief Operating Officer, Yarra Energy Foundation  
Phone: 03 7037 6045  
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