

# Media Release

1 May 2020



## Helping to empower local communities

Charities and not-for profit groups across rural, regional and remote NSW have long been at the heart of local communities, and once again, Essential Energy is asking for the community to help decide which local organisations need a bit of 'empowering'.

Following a successful launch in 2019, the program is back to support the local groups that are part of the fabric of their communities, such as animal rescues, community centres, sporting clubs and school P&Cs who need some extra assistance to continue offering their vital services.

Local community groups across the Essential Energy network area are being encouraged to apply for funding of up to \$2,500 through Essential Energy's Community Choices program, which launches on Thursday 30 April. Nominations are open for four weeks. Following that the community gets to vote for their preferred cause, closing on Thursday 18 June.

"Essential Energy recognises that many communities are currently doing it tough. They've experienced droughts and fires and have probably been impacted by the health and economic crisis that is COVID-19. As an organisation, we're doing what we can to support those grassroots organisations that support our communities," said Chantelle Bramley, General Manager Strategy, Regulation and Corporate Affairs.

"Our employees live and work across regional, rural and remote NSW. We understand how important these organisations are for strong communities, and we're proud to provide this funding and stand shoulder to shoulder with them."

The program is open to any charity, registered not-for-profit or community group within Essential Energy's network area and sees the public voting online for who they'd like to receive a share of the \$175,000 state-wide funding pool.

The entire process, from nominating to voting, can be completed online, meaning people can participate while still complying with the current social distancing requirements.

2020 nominees must be able to receive payments by electronic funds transfer (EFT), and provide photos, commentary and stories about their organisations and the work they do.

Nominations for the Community Choices Program are open until 29 May. Visit [essentialenergy.com.au/choices](https://essentialenergy.com.au/choices) to learn more or make a nomination.

### FACT FILE:

- Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing 865,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW.
- Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline, 163,417 of those in designated bushfire zones.
- The network services more than 855,000 customers with approximately 4.6 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.
- Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer.
- Essential Energy is proud to be the 2019 winner of the Australian Apprentices – Employer Award.

<ENDS>

Media contact: Mitchell Cutting, Media & PR Specialist, t: 0428167737