

Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission

April 2026

Strengthening protections for energy customers

We are inviting Victorians to help shape the next stage of energy reforms, with a focus on strengthening protections for vulnerable Victorians.

We are seeking feedback on:

- ways to improve outcomes for First Nations energy customers, including what retailers can do to better support cultural safety
- opportunities to strengthen existing family violence protections
- ways to improve the accuracy of customer contact details to ensure people can be contacted during extreme weather events that may trigger unplanned power outages.



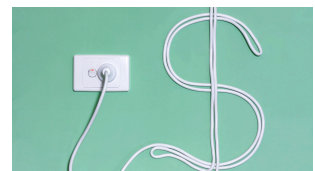
The review is the second stage of the commission's review of the Energy Retail Code of Practice.

[Read more](#)

Victorian regulator publishes draft default electricity price

Our draft decision on the 2026-27 Victorian Default Offer (VDO) proposes a reduction in each of the state's five electricity distribution zones.

On average, domestic customers would save \$46 a year (three per cent) and small business customers would save \$172 (five per cent).



The commission independently reviews the VDO each year. It is a fair, independently set electricity price that:

- gives Victorians access to a reasonable electricity deal, even if they are unable or unwilling to engage in the retail market
- acts as a reference price so customers can more easily compare different deals in the market
- is the maximum amount electricity retailers can charge customers in an embedded network, such as an apartment complex, retirement home or caravan park.

Approximately 17 per cent of households (510,000) and 21 per cent of small businesses (61,000) are currently on the VDO.

[Read more](#)

Proposed rules to protect life support customers during outages and extreme weather events

We have proposed new rules to improve how energy businesses register customers who rely on life support equipment.

Victorian rules require energy businesses to keep a register of customers who rely on life-support equipment. These registers are given to emergency services during major power outages and extreme weather events like bushfires.



Accurate life support registers help emergency services focus their efforts on those needing critical help during major power outages.

[Read more](#)

Regulator releases water price review draft decisions for Melbourne Water and North East Water

We have released our draft decisions on the maximum prices Melbourne Water and North East Water can charge their customers for water services over the next five years (1 July 2026 to 30 June 2031).

Our draft decision consultation is now open on [Engage Victoria](#) and will close on 1 May 2026.



[Read more](#)

Enforcement action

Regulator takes energy retailer ENGIE to court alleging customer support failures

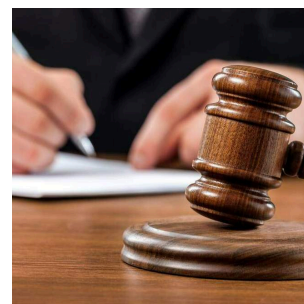
We have commenced civil penalty proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria against energy retailer ENGIE.

ENGIE is the fifth largest energy retailer in the state, with 180,000 electricity and 155,000 gas residential customers in Victoria.

The commission alleges that between 23 January 2024 and 14 November 2024 ENGIE broke Victorian energy laws by:

- failing to assist customers experiencing financial difficulties
- failing to provide family violence protections
- failing to follow rules designed to prevent bill shock
- collecting debts from customers receiving financial difficulty assistance.

The customers identified in court documents include pensioners, a family violence victim-survivor, a single parent and a carer.



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Regulator accepts court-enforceable undertaking over regional Victorian Energy Upgrades installations

We have accepted a court-enforceable undertaking requiring Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) accredited business Ecovantage Pty Ltd to rectify non-compliant water heater installations at its own cost.

This is the first enforceable undertaking the commission has accepted under the VEU program.

The VEU program is an energy efficiency program that helps Victorians cut their energy bills by supporting households and businesses to use energy more efficiently. Accredited businesses undertake energy efficiency upgrades that entitle them to create Victorian energy efficiency certificates, which they can then sell.



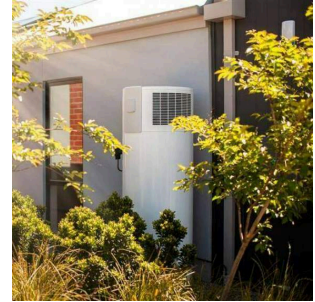
Ecovantage has acknowledged it claimed up to 31,666 Victorian energy efficiency certificates for

non-compliant heat pump water heater installations across 82 sites, largely in the Barwon South West and Loddon Mallee regions.

[Read more](#)

Businesses forfeit \$4.2 million in energy efficiency certificates, one banned for false claims

We have banned one accredited business from the VEU program, and refused millions of dollars in certificates claimed by two businesses for allegedly providing false information about energy efficiency projects and breaching consumer protections.



We have cancelled the VEU accreditation of Shantey Pty Ltd (Energy Efficient Upgrades) for providing false information for its energy efficiency projects and breaching consumer protections. The business is banned from re-applying for VEU accreditation for five years.

We have also refused registration of 48,550 certificates created by Ecosaver Australia Pty Ltd, for providing falsified photo evidence for its energy efficiency projects and breaching consumer protections

[Read more](#)

Consultations

We're currently seeking feedback on:

- [Energy Storage Project No 6 Pty Ltd as trustee of The Energy Storage Project No 6 Unit Trust - application for electricity generation licence](#) - Consultation closes 9 April 2026.
- [Victorian Default Offer price review 2026–27](#) - Consultation closes 10 April 2026
- [Review of life support protections in Victoria](#) - Consultation closes 16 April 2026
- [Energy Retail Code of Practice review](#) - Consultation closes 24 April 2026
- [Water price review 2026](#) - Consultation closes 1 May 2026

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