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# Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission

**January 2026**

## **Alpine and Hindmarsh councils not compliant with rate caps**

Our annual Council Rate Cap Compliance Report shows two of the state's 79 local councils exceeded the three per cent rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government.

The report also notes that Ballarat City Council and Bayside City Council did not increase their rates at all in 2025-26, and that Hepburn and Indigo shires had a higher rate cap approved by the commission.



[Read more](#)

## Victorian energy retailers surrender over 6.5 million certificates to meet 2024 energy efficiency obligations

Victorian energy retailers have surrendered over 6.5 million energy efficiency certificates to meet 2024 energy efficiency obligations. The certificates are valued at over \$540 million.



[Read more](#)

## Water performance report shows increase in customers accessing support

Our annual water performance report shows Victorian households continue to face cost of living pressures, with a 23 per cent increase in households accessing state government funded Utility Relief Grants, compared to last year.



[Read more](#)

## Enforcement action

### Energy customers protected as retailers pay a record \$24.5 million in fines in 2025

Energy retailers paid a record \$24,467,958 for breaching Victoria's consumer protections in 2025, as the commission continued its crackdown on practices that exacerbate cost of living pressures or negatively affect vulnerable customers.



[Read more](#)

## **\$16 million in claims for ineligible upgrades denied**

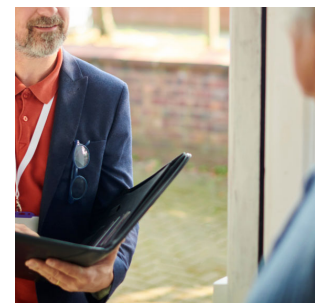
Businesses were ordered to forfeit \$16 million in Victorian energy efficiency certificates and struck with serious sanctions in 2025, as the commission cracks down on non-compliance in the Victorian Energy Upgrades program.



[Read more](#)

## **Businesses punished for providing false information, failing to get consent for energy efficient upgrades**

We have taken action against two Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) accredited businesses for allegedly breaching the program rules.



[Read more](#)

## Consultations

### Getting to Fair: Advancing Equity draft strategy

We are seeking feedback on our draft plan to address the systems-level barriers that impact how people access essential services, with a continued focus on the experience of consumers experiencing vulnerability.

**Consultation closes 5pm, Wednesday 18 February 2026.**



[Have your say](#)

### Wooreen Project Trust electricity generation licence

Wooreen Project Pty Ltd as trustee for the Wooreen Project Trust has applied for a licence to generate electricity for supply or sale.

**Consultation closes 5pm, Tuesday 27 January 2026.**



[Have your say](#)

### Mornington BESS Project Pty Ltd electricity generation licence

Mornington BESS Project Trust has applied for a licence to generate electricity for supply or sale.

**Consultation closes 5pm, Tuesday 27 January 2026.**



Have your say

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