

Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission
September 2021

Welcome to Essential News, our regular update on key decisions, releases and events from the Essential Services Commission.

Rising debt remains 'key concern' for community sector

Eighteen months into the coronavirus pandemic, the community help sector has told the state's economic regulator that rising debt is the number one issue for clients who are seeking help.

[Read more about the roundtable →](#)



Origin Energy pays penalty after sending disconnection warnings by text message

Origin Energy companies have paid \$450,000 in penalties for the alleged wrongful disconnection of 349 customers after sending text messages that failed to inform customers about payment help.

[Find out more →](#)



Victorians could save on default electricity offer price

Victorian small business and residential customers on a default electricity offer could see their annual bills reduced by at least five per cent, under [our draft](#)

Energy safety net review underway

We are reviewing the effectiveness of the safety net designed to help anyone

[decision](#), which is our for consultation until 8 October.

[Find out more and have your say at Engage Victoria →](#)

Developing guidance for 2023 water price review

Recently we held workshops with water businesses on key financial parameters, our expectations for businesses' price submissions and our approach to 'fast-tracking' the review of price submissions.

We have also met with other key stakeholders including government departments and consumer representatives.

We plan to issue a guidance paper by late October 2021 with price submissions due in late September 2022. This will enable our assessment for new prices to take effect from 1 July 2023.

[Find out more →](#)

Spotlight on ...

Working together to get to fair

Developing Getting to fair – our new strategy aimed at breaking down barriers to essential services – involved working closely with Victorian consumers, regulated businesses, and community help and advocacy services.

[Watch some of the key stakeholders](#) reflect on their hopes for the future of this work.

Consultation

We're currently seeking feedback on the following documents:

- [Victorian Default Offer price review 2022](#) - closes 8 October
- [Making an Energy Retail Code of Practice](#) - closes 25 October
- [Updating the Compliance and Performance Reporting Guideline](#) - closes 25 October

struggling to pay their energy bills to see how well it's working to protect customers.

The payment difficulty framework, which has been in place since January 2019, contains some of the strictest rules in the country, leading the way on consumer protection.

[Find out more →](#)

Simply Energy pays penalty for alleged wrongful disconnection

Simply Energy has paid a \$5000 penalty for the alleged wrongful disconnection of a visually impaired, elderly woman's power and consequently her heating during a cold snap earlier this year.

Evidence obtained by us showed the customer called Simply Energy in April 2021 to let them know she was moving to a new house in May, but the company inadvertently disconnected her power 18 days early.

[Find out more →](#)

[Visit our consultations page →](#)

