

Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission
October 2024

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



Have your say on new rules to help reduce energy bills

We have commenced public consultation on proposed consumer reforms to help Victorian households access cheaper energy deals and increase support for consumers experiencing payment difficulty.

How you can get involved:

- [Register via Microsoft Teams](#) to attend our online information session on Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 3.30 pm.
- Email energyreform@esc.vic.gov.au to attend one of our workshops or one-on-one meetings throughout November 2024.
- Submit your feedback online via [Engage Victoria](#) by 5 pm 26 November 2024.



Port of Melbourne market rent inquiry 2025

We are inviting feedback during our second inquiry into the Port of Melbourne's rent-setting and reviewing process, covering the period from 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2024.

How you can get involved:

- Email transport@esc.vic.gov.au to attend our public forum on Thursday 7 November 2024 at 11 am.
- Email transport@esc.vic.gov.au to attend a confidential drop-in session on Tuesday 12 November or Thursday 14 November 2024.
- Submit your feedback online via [Engage Victoria](#) by 14 November 2024.

[Submit feedback →](#)

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Greater Western Water: delayed billing

We wrote to the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria about Greater Western Water's failure to issue some customers with quarterly bills following the IT upgrade of their billing platform.

The letter clarifies our position on Greater Western Water's proposed billing arrangements, with regard to the backbilling provisions outlined in Clause 6.7 of the Water Industry Standard - Urban Customer Service.

It provides for a four-month limit on backbilling, which is designed to:

- Promote accurate billing and timely communication by water businesses.
- Protect customers from bill shock, which is when a customer receives an unexpectedly large bill.

[Read the full letter →](#)



Elly Patira joins the Essential Services Commission

Elly Patira has been appointed as a commissioner. Her term will commence on 4 November 2024.

A commercial lawyer and expert in participatory approaches to public policy-making, Elly has deep public administration, regulation and legal experience and a longstanding passion for improving outcomes for marginalised consumer groups.

Elly has built a notable career in complex policy development and implementation, having held several senior executive roles within the Victorian Public Service.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Elly. We look forward to working with Elly to continue promoting the long-term interests of Victorian consumers.

[Read more →](#)



Water outcomes report 2023-24 out now

Our sixth annual water outcomes report is out now, showing water businesses are generally performing well against their customer outcome commitments.

A number of businesses provided strong support for customers struggling with current cost of living pressures. In some cases, financial assistance had doubled compared to the previous year.

However, our latest report shows a high number of capital works projects have been delayed or deferred.

The delays suggest many businesses did not adequately forecast their capital expenditure having regard to current market circumstances.

New guideline to help water businesses to self-report under the Water Industry Standards

We have published a new guideline to help water businesses self-report non-compliance with the Water Industry Standards.

The new guideline will help water businesses to decide what matters must be reported to the commission. It contains case studies and practical information about what, and how, water businesses should self-report.

Timely reporting by water businesses helps to ensure we are made aware of critical service issues in a timely way, and therefore able to take action to support better customer outcomes.

The guideline came into effect on 25 October 2024.

[Read the report →](#)

[Find out more →](#)

Your consumer rights and the support available to you



Learn about your rights as a consumer in the sectors we regulate, including electricity and gas, local government, water, transport and the Victorian Energy Upgrades program.

[Find out more →](#)

Consultations

We're currently seeking feedback on the following:

- [Requirements for water heating and space heating and cooling activities](#) - consultation closes 3 November 2024

- [Transmission Company Victoria Pty Ltd - application for electricity transmission licence](#) - consultation closes 6 November 2024
- [AusNet Infrastructure No.1 Pty Ltd - application for electricity transmission licence](#) - consultation closes 7 November 2024
- [KESS ProjectCo Pty Ltd ATF The KESS ProjectCo Trust - application for electricity generation licence](#) - consultation closes 7 November 2024
- [EE Solar 6 Pty Ltd as trustee for EE Solar 6 Trust - application for electricity generation licence](#) - consultation closes 11 November 2024
- [Latrobe Valley BESS Pty Ltd as trustee for Latrobe Valley BESS Project Trust - application for electricity generation licence](#) - consultation closes 14 November 2024
- [Review of New Customer Contributions](#) - consultation closes 15 November 2024

[View all current consultations →](#)

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