

## New electricity generation increases in Victoria

The number of energy generation licences approved in Victoria has surged in the past eight months.

According to the Essential Services Commission's latest energy market report, nine electricity generation licences were granted between July 2018 and February 2019. In comparison, between July 2017 and February 2018 three were approved.

The licences were granted to renewable generators including large scale wind and solar farms, and the first-ever large scale battery system.

Commission energy director Sarah McDowell says renewable energy is growing in Victoria.

"It is the first time large scale battery systems have been licenced to generate electricity in Victoria, with the latest data showing a significant increase in renewable energy in the state," she said.

"Since July last year we have licensed around 1,100 megawatts of generation capacity, which is enough to power around 226,000 households."

Despite growing generation, Ms McDowell says the consumer experience has not improved significantly over the past year.

Energy debt remains high, with the average customer in a hardship program \$1,456 in debt. Customers in hardship programs have increased by eight per cent, while disconnections have fallen.

Between July and December 2018 retailers had wrongfully disconnected 291 customers, with payments totalling \$432,225. The commission had resolved 16 wrongful disconnection payment cases referred by the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria – nine of which were found wrongful. A further 13 disconnections were withdrawn and conceded by the retailer.

From 1 January 2019, customers were given stronger protections from their energy retailer with a new payment difficulty framework now coming into effect.

Read the [Victorian Energy Market Update](#) on the commission's website.

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**ELECTRICITY GENERATION LICENCES****FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-19 (to date)**

| <b>Applicant</b>                          | <b>Type of licence</b> | <b>Capacity (MW)</b>       | <b>Issued date</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| LMS Energy Pty Ltd                        | Generation             | 23.7 (multiple sites)      | 06/02/2019         |
| Pacific Hydro Crowlands Wind Farm Pty Ltd | Generation             | 80                         | 12/09/2018         |
| Iraak Sun Farm Pty Ltd                    | Generation             | 112.5                      | 27/08/2018         |
| GESS ProjectCo Pty Ltd                    | Generation             | 25                         | 08/08/2018         |
| Wemen Asset Co Pty Ltd                    | Generation             | 87.5                       | 04/10/2018         |
| Murra Warra Project Co Pty                | Generation             | 226                        | 13/02/2019         |
| Bulgana Wind Farm Pty Ltd                 | Generation             | 194 – wind<br>20 – battery | 27/02/2019         |
| Nurmurkah Solar Farm Pty Ltd              | Generation             | 100                        | 27/02/2019         |
| Lal Lal Wind Farms Noms Pty Ltd           | Generation             | 228                        | 13/03/2019         |