

Powershop pays \$300,000 for allegedly discriminating against solar customers

Powershop has paid penalties totalling \$300,000 for allegedly discriminating against Victorian households with rooftop solar.

The Essential Services Commission found the energy retailer, under its Kogan Energy brand, offered solar customers more expensive plans than non-solar customers, which goes against the state's energy rules.

Commission chair Kate Symons says treating rooftop solar customers differently to non-solar customers is a clear contravention of Victoria's [Electricity Industry Act 2000](#).

"The Act requires licensees to offer to sell electricity to solar customers at the same tariffs and on the same terms and conditions that it offers to non-solar customers," she said.

The commission issued the retailer with 15 penalty notices after it found Powershop exclusively offered cheaper tariffs to its non-solar customers between 10 September 2019 and 7 April 2020.

The commission heard Kogan Energy Market Offers were not available to solar customers. Instead, solar customers could only access the tariffs under the Kogan Energy Solar Market Offers, which were more expensive.

The average monetary disadvantage was calculated to be \$25.13, with the highest discrepancy being \$302.53, over the eight-month period.

Ms Symons says with the number of solar customers in Victoria now exceeding [half a million households](#), retailers need to support the transition and not put obstacles in the way.

"Rooftop solar panels now [contribute almost a third](#) of the state's residential electricity demand and are a vital part of Victoria's future energy mix," she said.

Ms Symons says the commission's decision sends a strong message to Powershop, and all electricity retailers, that solar discrimination will not be tolerated.

"The commission took into account Powershop's timely co-operation and their acknowledgement of their wrongdoing in keeping the number of penalty notices to 15," she said.

Editors' note: The commission can issue energy industry penalty notices where it has reason to believe a business has committed an energy industry contravention. Payment of a penalty is not an admission of a contravention of their retail licences.

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