

Energy efficiency program saves hundreds for households and small business

In a year where stay-at-home restrictions led to bigger power bills for many Victorians, almost 200,000 homes will save an average of \$229 per year thanks to energy efficiency upgrades.

A new [report](#) released by the Essential Services Commission shows the [Victorian Energy Upgrades](#) program delivered energy efficiency upgrades across 189,536 homes and almost 15,000 businesses during 2020.

Commission chairperson Kate Symons says despite coronavirus restrictions curtailing activity for almost half the year, the program continues to deliver.

“With average annual savings of \$229 for households and \$3,114 for businesses, this program is delivering in tangible ways for all Victorians,” she said.

In 2020, the program:

- delivered an expected 5.5 million megawatt hours of electricity savings and 591,000 gigajoules of gas savings over the upgrade lifetime
- registered 6.053 million certificates to offset emissions generated by sales by Victorian retailers
- provided employment to 220 accredited businesses.

Chairperson Symons says the integrity of the program was maintained during 2020 with 42 investigations being conducted during periods affected by coronavirus restrictions.

“This included the largest regional investigation ever conducted under the program resulting in enforcement action against two companies,” she said.

In another matter, the commission issued a formal warning to an accredited provider after evidence suggested they unknowingly submitted falsified certificate claims to the value of \$620,000.*

Conditions were also imposed on the company to conduct independent audits to ensure any certificates created comply with the program’s legislation.

This case was also referred to police for investigation of possible fraud involving alleged manipulation of invoices.

*based on certificate prices at the time.

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