

## Regulator launches new industry resources to support consumers experiencing family violence

The Essential Services Commission has published a series of reports to support better practice responses to consumers experiencing family violence. The reports provide expert practical advice on engaging victim-survivors in the design, delivery and evaluation of family violence reforms and customer vulnerability work in the energy and water sectors.

The commission engaged the Victorian peak body for specialist family violence services [Safe and Equal](#), who worked with the University of Melbourne's [Safer Families Centre](#) and [WEAVERS](#) lived experience advisors and research group, to develop the reports.

Commission chair Kate Symons says over the past six years, the commission has collaborated with family violence experts, the community sector, and water and energy businesses on ways to provide safe and flexible assistance to customers affected by family violence.

“Following the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence, we developed a [family violence framework](#) that incorporates changes to our energy and water codes. We updated the rural and urban water customer service codes, and the Energy Retail Code, to include requirements for family violence assistance for customers.

“We knew the family violence provisions in our codes could lead to more direct engagement with victim-survivors of family violence. We needed to make sure our team was appropriately supported to do this work. The first step was seeking advice from experts on how to bring lived experience to our work on family violence, including our engagement,” said Commissioner Symons.

The commission marked the launch of the reports with a public webinar featuring presentations from Safe and Equal CEO Tania Farha and survivor-advocate Rebeca Carro. Assistant Treasurer the Hon Danny Pearson MP also provided a message of support to the event which was attended by over 100 participants from the community, energy, water and government sectors.

Commissioner Symons says the commission is grateful to those who contributed to reports.

“These reports signal a new phase in how we at the commission engage and support customers affected by family violence. Importantly, they also contribute to the whole of community effort in preventing and responding to family violence. We are pleased to share this practical guidance with all essential services providers and other businesses. We hope it will support you in your work to create better outcomes for consumers experiencing family violence,” said Commissioner Symons.

The reports are [now available on the commission's website](#).

**Media enquiries: Carmel Bordignon (03) 9032 1484**