

Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission
June - July 2023

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

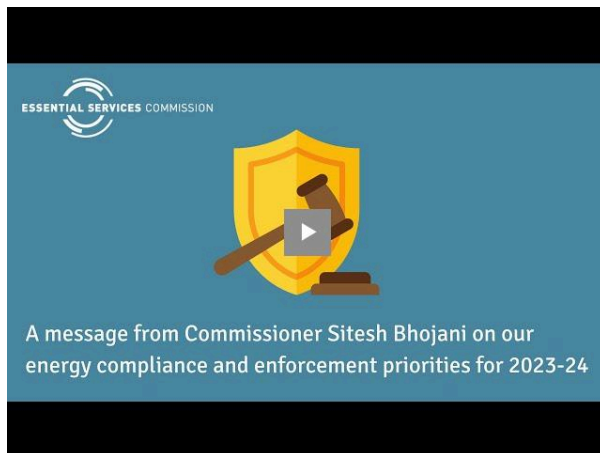
Our energy compliance and enforcement priorities for 2023-24

We outlined our priorities to hold regulated energy businesses to account and uphold the rights and protections of Victorian energy consumers over the next 12 months.

Commissioner Sitesh Bhojani has warned energy businesses that fall short of their obligations to Victorian energy consumers can expect tough action from us.

Watch Commissioner Sitesh Bhojani reflect on consumer protections remaining at the centre of our energy compliance and enforcement priorities for 2023-24 in the below [video](#).

[Find out more →](#)



Victorian Energy Market Report June 2023

We released our latest quarterly energy market report for January to March 2023.

The Victorian Energy Market Report June 2023 outlines key compliance and enforcement activities, data on customers experiencing payment difficulties and disconnections, as well as market entry and exits over the reporting period.

[Read the full report →](#)



New report shows the benefits of family violence protections for customers accessing essential services; but more needs to be done

Victorian customers are benefiting from family violence protections available from their water businesses, according to our new report.

We scrutinised how the family violence provisions in the Water Industry Standards are being implemented by water businesses, and what this means for customers who are affected by family violence. Guided and informed by an expert advisory panel of family violence survivor advocates, the review identifies benefits of family violence protections, but also identified opportunities for improvement.

[Read our findings report →](#)



New resources about pricing protections for embedded network customers

Do you live in an apartment building, caravan park or retirement village or other multi-tenanted premise? If so, your electricity may be supplied by a single energy seller. This is called an embedded network.

We released a suite of new consumer resources, including an [animated video](#) and [multi-language consumer fact sheets](#) to help inform Victorians about their rights and protections as an embedded network customer.

[Find out more →](#)



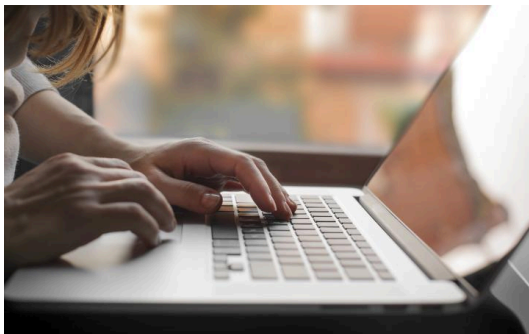
South East Water's enforceable undertaking over family violence protections

We accepted a court enforceable undertaking from South East Water Corporation (South East Water) over allegations it failed to uphold critical protections in place to support customers affected by family violence.

For the two-year period specified in the enforceable undertaking, South East Water has committed to improve its policies, training and compliance monitoring.

We will continue to work with Victoria's water businesses and support them to uphold our family violence rules through better practice processes and policies to assist customers affected by family violence.

[Find out more →](#)



Addressing poor quality water heater installations

We recently addressed concerns about poor quality heat pump water installations. We issued two communiques to industry raising concerns, and subsequently investigated the activities of 10 accredited persons.

This led to us taking enforcement action. We restricted two businesses from participating in water heater installations under the VEU program, placed conditions on the activities of two other businesses and issued warnings to six other businesses to improve the quality of their heat pump water heater installations.



Jemena pays penalties after allegedly breaching energy rules

Jemena Electricity Networks (VIC) Ltd (Jemena) has paid \$795,468 in penalties for allegedly failing to comply with obligations that protect Victorian energy customers who need life support equipment, and who are affected by planned power outages.

Our investigation found evidence that Jemena had breached Victoria's energy laws on multiple occasions between March and September 2022.

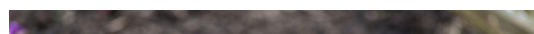
[Find out more →](#)



Final five-year pricing decisions for 14 Victorian water businesses released

We completed our review of pricing proposals from 14 of Victoria's water businesses for the next five years. As a result of the price review, prices have increased for most Victorian residential customers – but, for most, these will be below inflation.

[Find out more →](#)



heat pump water heater installations.

We have imposed requirements to report any poor quality installations to us, Energy Safe Victoria and the Victorian Building Authority, and to rectify any non-compliant installations within 10 business days. The investigation led to consumers impacted by non-compliant installations having those issues rectified by the businesses.

[Find out more →](#)

QEnergy and Mojo Power East (trading as People Energy) customer transfers following retailer market suspensions

On 16 June 2023, we commenced the 'retailer of last resort' process for QEnergy Limited (QEnergy). This was followed by Mojo Power East Pty Ltd (Mojo Power East), trading as People Energy, on 21 June 2023. Both failed electricity retailers are part of the ION Holdings group of companies, for which receivers have been appointed.

QEnergy and Mojo Power East customers were automatically transferred to AGL, Origin Energy or EnergyAustralia to ensure continued electricity supply.

[Find out more →](#)



New tariffs announced for 4 Victorian water businesses

We released our annual tariff approvals for four of Victoria's water businesses for 2023–24, which came into effect on 1 July 2023.

Greater Western Water, North East Water, Melbourne Water, and Goulburn-Murray Water each undertook detailed price reviews in previous years, and were not included in our [price decisions announced in June](#).

[Find out more →](#)



Developing a Land Access Code of Practice

As part of our consultation process, we held an [online public forum](#) and invited stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft Land Access Code of Practice via [Engage Victoria](#).

We will review the feedback that we've received and will continue to proactively engage with the community, transmission companies, government departments and agencies as this review progresses.

We are aiming to release the final code of practice over the coming months.

If you have any questions, please contact us at energyreform@esc.vic.gov.au.

[Find out more →](#)

Energy bill support for Victorian consumers

Victoria has one of the most comprehensive sets of energy consumer protections and assistance programs in Australia.

These include protections for residential and small business customers when it comes to energy retail price changes, and energy retailers communicating with you about what offer is best for you.

[Learn more about your energy rights and the support available to you →](#)

Consultation

We're currently seeking feedback on the following:

- [Sun Spot 3 Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Generation Licence](#) - closes 21 August 2023
- [Pacific Blue Smart Communities Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Generation Licence](#) - closes 23 August 2023
- [Y.E.S. Energy \(SA\) Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Wholesale Licence](#) - closes 23 August 2023
- [Glenrowan Solar Farm Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Generation Licence](#) - closes 1 September 2023

[Visit our consultations page →](#)

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