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Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission
March 2024

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

Victorian Default Offer 2024-25 draft decision

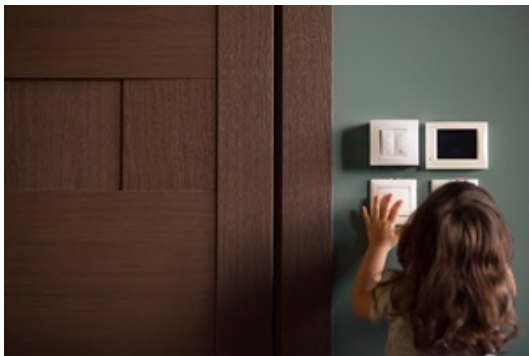
We have released our [draft decision on the 2024-25 Victorian Default offer](#) for public consultation. The draft decision proposes to reduce the Victorian Default Offer by around \$112 (or 6.4 per cent) for residential customers and around \$266 (or 7 per cent) for small business customers from 1 July 2024.

The Victorian Default Offer provides Victorian consumers access to a fair electricity deal, and acts as a reference price so customers can more easily compare different deals in the market.

The draft decision will be open for comment on [Engage Victoria](#) until 19 April 2024.

The final decision is expected to be released in late May 2024.

- [View the draft decision and make a submission →](#)
- [Read our media release →](#)



Goulburn-Murray Water price review 2024

We have released our draft decision on Goulburn-Murray Water's proposed prices for water services for the 4-year period starting 1 July 2024.

Goulburn-Murray Water set out a comprehensive plan to deliver tangible benefits for customers, proposing lower prices for key services including gravity irrigation, with an extensive engagement program informing the services to be delivered.

Our [draft decision is open for feedback on Engage Victoria](#) until 7 May 2024. We will

New land access rules for electricity transmission companies

The enforceable [Land Access Code of Practice](#) came into effect on 1 March 2024.

The new rules apply to licensed electricity transmission companies accessing (or seeking to access) private land using statutory powers under section 93 of the [Electricity Industry Act 2000](#). This includes:

- all stages of new transmission projects
- relevant upgrades to existing transmission assets, including:
 - augmentation
 - extension
 - decommissioning of lines.

Our [Information for landowners factsheet](#) explains what to expect when an electricity transmission company wants to access private land for a new project or upgrade.

[Find out more →](#)



Greater Western Water price review 2024

We have released our draft decision on Greater Western Water's proposed prices for water services for the 4-year period starting 1 July 2024.

This is Greater Western Water's first price review, following the merger of the former City West Water and Western Water businesses in 2021.

Greater Western Water's proposal for the four years from 1 July 2024 leads to a

hold a public forum on 23 April 2024 as part of the current consultation round.

- [Find out more →](#)
- [Register your attendance for the public forum →](#)
- [Read our media release →](#)



Victorian agencies join forces to improve heat pump hot water systems compliance

We are pleased to be working with Solar Victoria, other Victorian regulators and industry to improve compliance of heat pump water system installations across the state, including under the Victorian Energy Upgrades program.

This is in line with our proactive approach to supporting and monitoring compliance with the Victorian Energy Upgrades program to protect consumers and program integrity.

- [Read our media release →](#)



decrease in a typical annual customer bill for most customers.

Our [draft decision is open for feedback on Engage Victoria](#) until 7 May 2024. We will hold a public forum on 2 May 2024 as part of the current consultation round.

- [Find out more →](#)
- [Register your attendance for the public forum →](#)
- [Read our media release →](#)



Our Victorian Energy Upgrades program compliance and enforcement priorities

We have shared our enduring and strategic priorities for compliance and enforcement in the Victorian Energy Upgrades program, with a focus on consumer safety and wellbeing, quality, integrity and reputation.

The priorities are informed by potential harm to consumers and the program, compliance trends and issues, and consumer feedback. Compliance matters are also considered as part of our audit program and annual accreditation renewal processes for accredited persons.

- [Find out more →](#)
- [Read our media release →](#)





Financial Counselling Victoria 2024 Summit

It was great to be part of Financial Counselling Victoria's 2024 Summit, *The Changing Face of Hardship* earlier this month.

Our staff heard from a range of essential service providers and financial counsellors who discussed the impacts of rising living costs, the housing crisis, climate change and the compounding impacts of intersectionality.

We are reminded that we must continue to listen and collaborate to understand how customers experience vulnerability so we can contribute to better solutions.

[Find out how we are regulating with consumer vulnerability in mind →](#)



IPAA Victoria's International Women's Day Gala Dinner

As an economic regulator committed to promoting the long-term interests of Victorian consumers, we are committed to advancing gender equality and women's economic equality.

Our staff celebrated at the annual International Women's Day Gala Dinner hosted by Amanda Stevens, CEO of IPAA Victoria.

We were honoured to hear from Danielle Wood, Chair of the Productivity Commission, Dr Morley Muse, Co-Founder iSTEM Co, and Manasi Wagh, Manager of Economic Quality at Women's Health in the North. Traditional Custodian, Dr Mandy Nicholson gave the Welcome to Country.

We remain committed to providing equitable opportunities for women and ensuring we have a workplace culture that prioritises equity, safety, respect and flexibility for all staff.

[View our Employee Prospectus to learn more about our commitment to our staff →](#)

Consultation

We're currently seeking feedback on the following:

- [Tesla Energy Ventures Australia Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Retail Licence](#) - consultation closes 29 March 2024
- [Flo Energy Australia Pty Ltd - Application for Electricity Retail Licence](#) - consultation closes 2 April 2024
- [Victorian Default Offer price review 2024-25](#) - consultation closes 19 April 2024
- [Goulburn-Murray Water price review 2024](#) - consultation closes 7 May 2024
- [Greater Western Water price review 2024](#) - consultation closes 7 May 2024

[Visit our consultations page →](#)

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