

Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission
September 2023

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

Report shows Victorians missed out on millions of dollars in energy bill savings last financial year

Victorian households could have saved an estimated \$191 million on electricity bills and \$89 million on gas bills last financial year if they had been on their retailer's best offer, according to data from our latest [Victorian Energy Market Report](#).

The report provides analysis of prices and competition in Victorian retail energy markets, key compliance and enforcement activities, data on customers experiencing payment difficulties, disconnections, and market entry and exits over the reporting period April to June 2023.

[Read the latest Victorian Energy Market Report →](#)



Consultation opens for revocation of the Electricity System Code

We have published a [draft decision for consultation, proposing to revoke the Electricity System Code](#). Established in 2000, the code contains obligations relating to Victorian electricity transmission and distribution businesses.

The proposed revocation of the code is the latest in our review of our energy codes. We propose to revoke the Electricity System Code as our review indicates that obligations in the code have been largely superseded by the national energy framework – the National Electricity Rules and National Electricity Law, which are administered by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

As part of our review, we also plan to

EWOV & ESC Family Violence Leaders Forum

Over 100 leaders from the water, energy and community sectors joined Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Catherine Wolthuizen and Essential Services Commission chairperson Kate Symons for the online family violence leaders forum on Tuesday 29 August.

This important event was a collaboration between the commission and the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) and provided an opportunity for attendees to hear insights and share learnings about how the water and energy sectors can work individually and together to reduce the incidence of family violence and financial abuse.

A [video recording of the forum](#) is available on our website.

- [Find out more →](#)
- [Read our news update →](#)



New performance report released on the Victorian Energy Upgrades program

The Victorian Energy Upgrades program is the largest energy efficiency program in Australia, providing Victorians access to discounted energy-saving products and activities.

Our [2022 Performance Report](#) released last week shows that over 535,000 Victorian households and businesses benefitted from energy efficient upgrades through the Victorian Energy Upgrades program in 2022, which is expected to save over 7.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

[Find out more →](#)

As part of our review, we also plan to update existing transmission licences, simplify licence conditions and remove inconsistencies present among licences, if any.

We are seeking stakeholder feedback until 9 November 2023 to inform our final decision.

[Submit your feedback on our proposal to revoke the Electricity System Code →](#)

Appointment of new Executive Director - Victorian Energy Upgrades

Following a competitive recruitment search, Baethan Mullen has been appointed as our new Executive Director – Victorian Energy Upgrades.

In this role, Baethan will have management oversight of the Victorian Energy Upgrades program as it relates to our program administration and regulation functions. He will also oversee our recently strengthened audit, compliance and enforcement functions, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with policymakers and fellow regulators.

We look forward to working with Baethan and the Victorian Energy Upgrades team on the continued success of this important energy efficiency program.

[Read our media release →](#)

Sharing our progress at the VicWater Conference

Our chairperson Kate Symons participated in an insightful panel discussion on water industry regulation at the annual VicWater conference in September.

Kate shared our progress and reiterated our commitment to support water businesses to deliver improved value and outcomes for Victorians.

Recently we conducted a [price review for 14 Victorian water businesses](#) with two more underway for [Goulburn-Murray Water and Greater Western Water](#). We also [reviewed the family violence provisions in the Water Industry Standards](#) in which we outlined four areas for improvement and eight actions we will take to build on the existing strengths of the water sector response.

[Learn how we regulate the water sector →](#)



From left to right: Commission chairperson, Kate Symons and Environment Protection Authority CEO, Lee Miezi speaking on a panel facilitated by Freya Marsden at the VicWater conference.

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:

- [Girgarre Solar Farm Pty Ltd application for electricity generation licence](#) – closes 20 October 2023
- [Revoking the Electricity System Code](#) - closes on 9 November 2023

[Visit our consultations page →](#)

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