

# Essential News

Latest news from the Essential Services Commission

August 2023

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

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## Introducing our new Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Sheppard

Following a competitive executive recruitment search, Sarah Sheppard has been appointed as our new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Sarah's qualifications, experience, and leadership qualities will be invaluable in achieving our strategic priorities and leading our day-to-day operations.

Sarah has been acting CEO since 10 June 2023 and is taking a well-deserved break in September ahead of commencing in the permanent CEO role from 3 October 2023.

We look forward to working with Sarah as our new CEO to deliver better essential services for all Victorians.

[Find out more →](#)



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## Failed gas retailer Weston Energy pays penalty after allegedly failing to meet energy efficiency liabilities

Former gas retailer [Weston Energy Pty Ltd \(Weston Energy\) has paid a penalty of \\$53,600](#) after allegedly failing to surrender enough Victorian energy efficiency certificates to offset its legislative liability under the [Victorian Energy Upgrades program](#) in 2022.

The penalty is a reminder to energy retailers operating in the state that they

## Our latest progress report on breaking down barriers to essential services

Supporting Victorians experiencing vulnerability to have equitable access to energy, water, transport and other critical services remains a key focus for us amid growing cost-of-living pressures for consumers.

We have released a [progress report](#) on our ['Getting to fair' strategy](#) aimed at breaking down the barriers Victorians may face in accessing or engaging with regulated essential services.

The strategy has helped us to keep the experiences, needs and expectations of consumers experiencing vulnerability at the centre of our work program and regulatory decisions. At the two-year mark, we have implemented 21 of the 33 actions we committed to undertake.

[Read the full report →](#)



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## Unbooked taxi fares to increase following annual adjustment for fuel and labour costs

[Maximum fares for unbooked taxis](#) will increase 4.1 per cent from 1 October 2023 following an annual fare adjustment.

This adjustment is driven largely by increases in labour costs following the Fair Work Commission decision in June 2023 to increase the national minimum wage by 8.6 per cent. The higher labour costs have been offset slightly by a fall in fuel prices in the year to June 2023.

[Read more about the fare adjustment →](#)



are bound by clear obligations relating to the Victorian Energy Upgrades program.

[Find out more →](#)

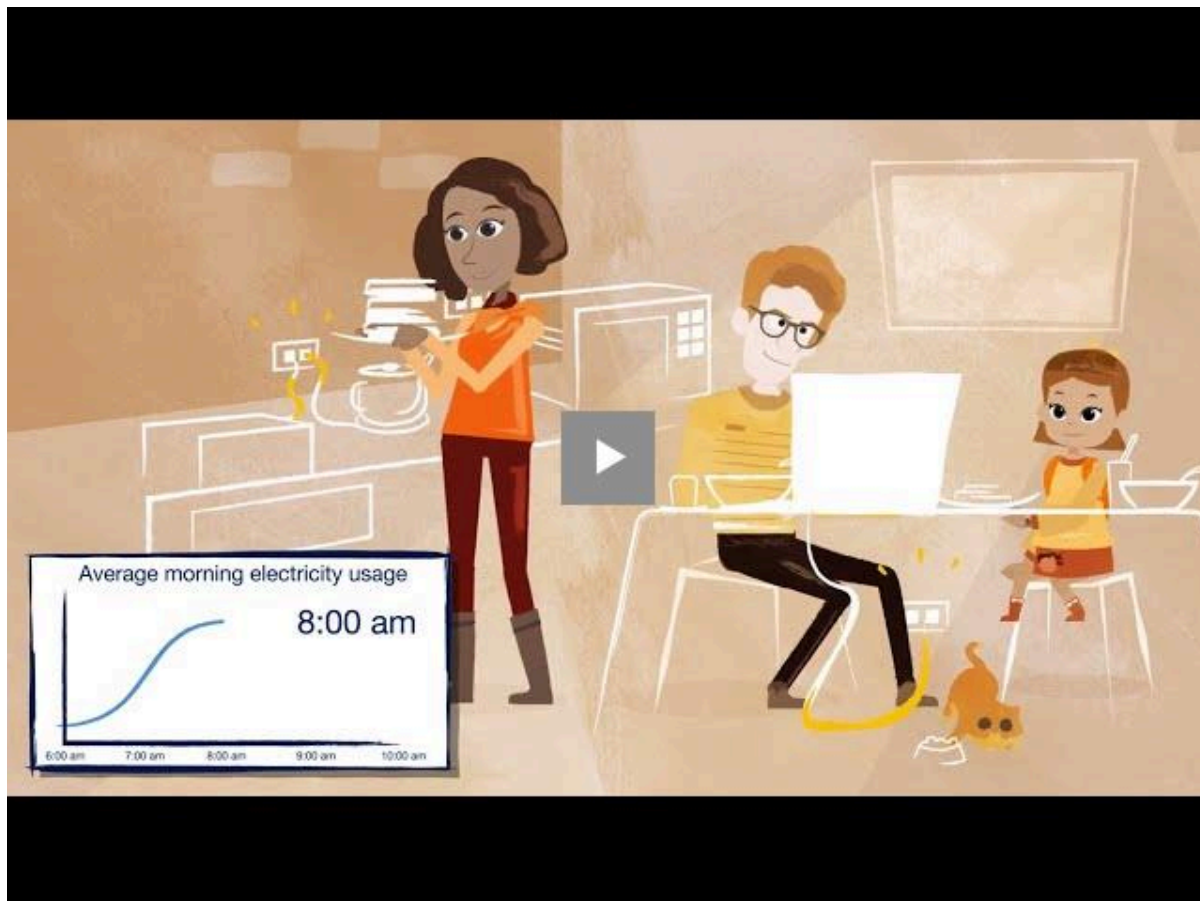


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## Why do the minimum feed-in tariffs change?

Are you a solar panel owner curious about the evolving trends in electricity prices and feed-in tariff rates? Watch our video below to learn what is driving the change in the minimum feed-in tariffs.

[Learn more about the minimum feed-in tariff →](#)



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## 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 →](#)

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## Consultation

We're currently seeking feedback on the following:

- [Glenrowan Solar Farm Pty Ltd - application for Electricity Generation Licence](#) - closes 1 September 2023

[Visit our consultations page →](#)

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