

- Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
- Minister for Solar Homes



MEDIA RELEASE

Keeping Solar Homes Safe For Victorians

9th Oct 2019

The Andrews Labor Government has banned a solar energy company from the Solar Homes program for at least two years, following joint investigations by Solar Victoria and Energy Safe Victoria (ESV).

Minister for Solar Homes Lily D'Ambrosio today announced swift action against an operator who put solar workers and home occupiers at risk, ensuring the landmark Solar Homes program continues to roll out safely.

Investigations found that Community Energy Group Pty Ltd, trading as Space Solar (Victoria), had employed unlicensed electrical workers to carry out works in an unsafe manner.

The sole director of Community Energy Group has also had their electrical registration cancelled by ESV after many of the company's installations audited by Solar Victoria were found to have technical and safety defects.

While some defects were minor and easily fixed, a number were far more serious and demonstrate a wilful disregard for Victoria's strict solar safety standards. These have now all been rectified.

The company has now been banned from the Solar Homes program for two years – both as a retailer and an installer – as part of Solar Victoria's continued push to ensure the solar industry is held to the highest standard.

Community Energy Group conducted 546 solar PV installations that received rebates under the Solar Homes program, who have been contacted by Solar Victoria to inform them of the audit findings.

Victoria is the only state in Australia that requires solar systems to be independently tested at the time of installation and provided with a certificate of electrical safety to demonstrate compliance.



Lily D'Ambrosio MP

STATE MEMBER FOR MILL PARK



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Given the behaviour of Community Energy Group, their customers are encouraged to have their systems double-checked by an independent electrical safety inspector - a list is available at esv.vic.gov.au.

If further action is required customers can contact Consumer Affairs to discuss their rights under Australian Consumer Law. It's expected that the retailer covers all costs of any repair work.

Solar Victoria and ESV continue to work together to audit household solar systems on a risk basis, with more than 1,500 completed since the program began. ESV has also formed a renewable energy taskforce to inspect work completed by licensed electricians in the sector.

Data provided by Solar Victoria has enabled ESV to identify trends and investigate unsafe installation work.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Solar Homes Lily D'Ambrosio

“Dodgy solar operators that put the safety of Victorians at risk have no place in the Solar Homes program, and we won't hesitate to kick them out.”

“This kind of behaviour is totally unacceptable. Customers deserve to know their solar installations are completed to the highest standards and that's why we have such a strict audit regime in the country.”

“The majority of solar retailers and installers do the right thing – we're acting to protect their reputation and uphold the standards of our world-leading solar industry.”

