

Shorter Paybacks, Bigger Impact: NSW Program Makes Energy Projects Stack Up

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Shorter Paybacks, Bigger Impact: NSW Program Makes Energy Projects Stack Up

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The Safeguard Acceleration Panel is a NSW Government initiative that offers, through the generation and sale of Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs), enough funding to get energy saving projects across the line. It gives Accredited Certificate Providers (ACPs) like Northmore Gordon the ability to lock in a future ESC price for projects, removing market uncertainty and improving project payback calculations.

Publication context: This article reflects its publication date. Market prices, program rules, reporting duties and deadlines may have changed. Confirm current official guidance before making a decision.

There are many viable energy-saving projects across the state that aren't progressing - not because they don't save energy, but because the financials don't stack up.

The NSW ESS Safeguard Acceleration Panel aims to change that.

What Is the Safeguard Acceleration Panel?

This NSW Government initiative offers, through the generation and sale of Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs), enough funding to get energy saving projects across the line.

It gives Accredited Certificate Providers (ACPs) like Northmore Gordon the ability to lock in a future ESC price for projects - removing market uncertainty and improving project payback calculations.

Real-World Example: How the Program Can Flip a Project Decision

Scenario: Local Aquatic Centre Boiler Replacement

- Current system: Gas boiler - Proposed upgrade: Heat pump - CAPEX: \$3,000,000 - OPEX savings: \$500,000 per year - ESCs generated: 25,000 - Market ESC price: \$20 (after M&V; fees) - ESC income: \$500,000 - Payback: 5 years - Internal payback threshold: 4 years - Project status: Not approved

Enter Safeguard Accelerator: - Northmore Gordon negotiates ESC price of \$41 (net) through the program - New ESC income: \$1,025,000 - New payback: 3.95 years - Project status: Signed off

What We Need From You

To assess if your project is eligible for the program, we'll need a few key inputs:

1. Energy Saving Plan A short summary of the proposed upgrade - what it replaces and how it saves energy.
2. Estimated Energy Savings Annual reduction in electricity or gas (kWh, GJ , etc.).

3. Capital Cost (CAPEX) Total cost to implement the upgrade.

4. Payback Expectations Your internal threshold for project approval - 3, 4, or 5 years?

With this, Northmore Gordon can model ESC revenue under the guaranteed pricing and confirm if the project qualifies for program support.

Who Should Apply?

This program is ideal for: - Industrial sites and large facilities with high energy use and capital upgrades planned - Safeguard Mechanism participants looking to reduce emissions and exposure - Organisations with shelved projects that didn't previously meet payback thresholds - Facility types such as manufacturing plants, hospitals, aquatic centres, universities and data centres

Northmore Gordon's Role

As an ACP and engineering-led consultancy, we do more than just process certificates:

- We develop M&V-compliant; project plans - We calculate and forecast ESC yield and revenue - We manage application and compliance - We build board-ready business cases for internal approval

Timing Is Critical

Projects must be commissioned by January 2026 to qualify. Given engineering, procurement, and installation timelines, we need to identify viable projects well before then.

Northmore Gordon is actively assessing projects for inclusion in our Safeguard Acceleration Panel portfolio now.

Next Steps

If you have a proposed energy upgrade in NSW - even one previously considered "not viable" - it may now qualify.

Contact Jack Warren at Northmore Gordon or submit your interest here for: - A quick eligibility check - ESC revenue modelling - Payback optimisation under the Safeguard Acceleration Panel

Let's turn good ideas into great projects and Do More With Less.

Scheme and certificate context

Before using a certificate or grant figure, confirm the current scheme method, eligible activity, effective date, evidence requirements, price date and registration or application process.

Related guidance

Certificate services

Government schemes

Contact us

Read the original article for the source publication and its full context.

What is the NSW Safeguard Acceleration Panel?

The Safeguard Acceleration Panel is a NSW Government initiative that offers, through the generation and sale of Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs), enough funding to get energy saving projects across the line. It gives Accredited Certificate Providers (ACPs) like Northmore Gordon the ability to lock in a future ESC price for projects, removing market uncertainty and improving project payback calculations.

Why do some viable energy-saving projects in NSW not progress, according to the article?

According to the article, many viable energy-saving projects across NSW aren't progressing not because they don't save energy, but because the financials don't stack up — i.e., the payback periods don't meet internal approval thresholds.

Can you give an example of how the Safeguard Acceleration Panel changes a project's viability?

Yes. In a local aquatic centre boiler replacement scenario, a gas boiler is proposed to be upgraded to a heat pump with CAPEX of \$3,000,000 and OPEX savings of \$500,000 per year. Generating 25,000 ESCs at the market price of \$20 (after M&V; fees) gives ESC income of \$500,000 and a payback of 5 years — exceeding the internal 4-year threshold, so the project is not approved. Through the Safeguard Accelerator, we negotiate a net ESC price of \$41, raising ESC income to \$1,025,000 and shortening the payback to 3.95 years, resulting in the project being signed off.

What information does Northmore Gordon need to assess a project's eligibility for the Safeguard Acceleration Panel?

We need: 1) an Energy Saving Plan (a short summary of the proposed upgrade — what it replaces and how it saves energy), 2) Estimated Energy Savings (annual reduction in electricity or gas, in kWh, GJ, etc.), 3) Capital Cost (CAPEX) — the total cost to implement the upgrade, and 4) Payback Expectations — the organisation's internal threshold for project approval (3, 4, or 5 years).

Who is the Safeguard Acceleration Panel program ideal for?

The program is ideal for industrial sites and large facilities with high energy use and capital upgrades planned; Safeguard Mechanism participants looking to reduce emissions and exposure; organisations with shelved projects that didn't previously meet payback thresholds; and facility types such as manufacturing plants, hospitals, aquatic centres, universities and data centres.

What role does Northmore Gordon play as an Accredited Certificate Provider (ACP) in this program?

As an ACP and engineering-led consultancy, we develop M&V-compliant; project plans, calculates and forecasts ESC yield and revenue, manages application and compliance, and builds board-ready business cases for internal approval.

What is the deadline for projects to qualify under the Safeguard Acceleration Panel, and why does timing matter?

Projects must be commissioned by January 2026 to qualify for the Safeguard Acceleration Panel. Timing is critical because engineering, procurement, and installation timelines mean viable projects need to be identified well before that deadline.

What is an Energy Savings Certificate (ESC) as defined on the page?

An energy savings certificate (ESC) is a tradeable certificate created under Division 7 of Part 9 of the Electricity Supply Act 1995. Each ESC represents one notional megawatt hour (MWh) of energy.

What is the NSW Energy Savings Scheme (ESS) mentioned in the article?

The NSW Energy Savings Scheme (ESS), established in 2009, provides financial incentives to install, improve or replace energy savings equipment and appliances in NSW households and businesses. Incentives take the form of tradeable Energy Savings Certificates (ESCs); householders and businesses who fund energy savings activities transfer the right to create ESCs to Accredited Certificate Providers (ACPs) in return for a discount on the cost of the activity.

How should an organisation present an energy project to Northmore Gordon for Safeguard Acceleration Panel assessment?

Submit a project brief describing the facility location, existing and proposed equipment, annual energy savings estimate, total capital cost, internal payback threshold, and current project stage. Distinguish any preliminary estimates from measured data. Identify prior incentives or certificate arrangements if applicable. We can then establish an appropriate assessment scope and determine programme suitability before detailed feasibility work begins.