

Welcome to our January 2026 Compliance Update.

Canonical: <https://northmoregordon.com/news/january-2026-compliance-update/>

Details:

[Summary](#) | [Article](#) | [Current use](#) | [Related guidance](#)

About this update

This dated news record has been reorganised for clear reading and connected to current guidance.

Publication date: January 21, 2026.

Status note: Present-tense statements, market figures, deadlines and program details in the archived record belong to its publication date. Check current official sources before making a decision.

What this article reported

Dear Valued Partners,

Welcome to Northmore Gordon's first Compliance Update Newsletter for 2026.

As we enter the new year, this update is intended to support Deemed partners in resetting, refocusing, and maintaining robust compliance across the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU), Clean Energy Regulator (CER), Energy Savings Scheme (ESS), Peak Demand Reduction Scheme (PDRS), and Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGC) schemes.

January represents a critical compliance period, with a strong regulatory focus on readiness, system alignment, and ensuring that all installations, documentation, and internal processes reflect current legislative and program requirements.

1. Important ESC Update - 23 December 2025

On 23 December 2025, the Essential Services Commission (ESC) released updated Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program documentation, including the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) Guidelines - Version 14, alongside multiple revised Activity Guides.

Northmore Gordon has updated these material compliance changes that require partners implementation and cooperation.

Summary of Key Updates

The revised documentation includes:

Formal introduction of Commercial & Industrial (C&I;) Solar Photovoltaic - Activity 47

Updates to VEEC Assignment Forms, now referencing the Building Plumbing Commission (formerly the Victorian Building Authority)

Updated VEU program fees, effective 1 January 2026

Partners are strongly encouraged to review the updated VEET Guidelines and all applicable Activity Guides in full and if in doubt or need help with clarifying these requirements - please reach out to our Compliance team.

2. VEET Guidelines - Version 14 (Key Compliance Changes)

The updated VEET Guidelines (Version 14) now:

Specify training and competency requirements for participants delivering C&I; Solar PV (Activity 47)

The lead solar system designer must hold current Solar Accreditation Australia (SAA) accreditation in:

Grid Connected PV (Design Only) , or

Grid Connected PV (Design & Installation)

The lead solar system installer must hold current SAA accreditation in:

Grid Connected PV (Installation Only) , or

Grid Connected PV (Design & Installation)

All personnel involved in installation or onsite works must:

Have completed an approved Working at Heights unit of competency, and

Hold a valid White Card (Construction Induction training)

These requirements are mandatory and must be met prior to undertaking Activity 47 installations.

Define record-keeping requirements for C&I; Solar PV activities and improve enforceability of these requirements. Partners must retain evidence of:

Consumer quote & design documentation (system components, warranties, performance, price, and consumer payment)

Invoice/proof of purchase (installation details, incentives applied, and amount paid by the consumer)

Technical datasheets for installed inverter(s), PV module(s), and battery(s) (if applicable)

Geo-tagged photos (pre-, mid- and post-installation, installer onsite, and installed system components)

Monitoring portal evidence meeting VEU requirements

Certificate of Electrical Safety (CoES)

Licensed Electrical Inspector (LEI) inspection checklist (Annexure D)

Single-Line Diagram (SLD) (system layout, configuration, and components)

DNSP connection approval documentation

Reflect updated VEU program fees (Effective from 1 January 2026)

| Fee Description | Amount | | --- | --- | | Fee for creation of, and notification to determine registration of, a certificate | \$2.33 (fee until 31 Dec 2025 \$4.35 (fee from 1 Jan 2026) |

REMINDER: These fees apply to VEEC creation and surrender activities.

What You Should Expect Due to the increased VEEC upload fee, a \$2 increase per VEEC will apply from January 2026.

Practical impact:

Jobs created before 1 January 2026 will continue under the previous fee structure

Jobs created on or after 1 January 2026 will attract the additional \$2 VEEC creation fee

3. C & I Solar PV (Activity 47) New Additional Requirement

In response to identified compliance and safety issues across other solar programs, the ESC has introduced an additional requirement - LEI inspection assessment checklist for C&I; Solar PV installations.

What This Means for Partners

A Licensed Electrical Inspector (LEI) is requested to complete and sign the inspection assessment checklist published in the VEET Guidelines

The checklist addresses serious safety hazards posing an imminent risk to people or property

The checklist must be completed prior to finalising the inspection section of the Certificate of Electrical Safety (CoES)

Accredited Persons must retain a copy of the completed checklist

The ESC may request the checklist at any time and may require upload during VEEC creation

Refer to the latest C&I; Solar PV Activity guide for more information.

4. Solar PV and Battery Updates

4.1 Clean Energy Regulator Update - Cheaper Home Batteries Program

On 13 December 2025, the Australian Government announced a significant expansion of the Cheaper Home Batteries Program, increasing funding from \$2.3 billion to an estimated \$7.2 billion over the next four years.

Proposed STC Changes (Subject to Regulation)

From 1 May 2026, Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs) for solar batteries are proposed to be tiered based on battery size, with adjustments designed to:

Maintain an average discount of approximately 30% across battery sizes

Align incentives with declining battery costs

Support long-term program sustainability

4.2 Changes to the Battery STC Factor - Effective 1 May 2026

The STC factor which determines the number of STCs a system is entitled to create per kWh of useable capacity, will be adjusted to:

Decline more frequently (ever 6 months)

Decline at a higher rate

The table below shows the STC amounts proposed in the Regulation change

Table 1: Existing and proposed STC factors per kWh by year

Year	Period	Existing STC factor	Proposed STC factor*	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
2025	January - December	9.3	N/A	8.4	8.4	8.4	6.8	6.5	3.1
2026	January - April	8.4	8.4	8.4	6.8	6.5	4.6	3.6	2.1
2027	May - December	8.4	6.8	6.5	4.6	3.6	2.1	2.1	2.1
2028	January - June	7.4	5.7	5.2	4.1	3.6	2.1	2.1	2.1
2029	July - December	7.4	5.2	4.1	3.6	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
2030	January - June	4.7	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
2030	July - December	4.7	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1

* Adjustments have been proposed to the current STC factors from 1 May 2026, subject to Regulations being made.

What This Means for Partners

Battery systems remain eligible for support up to 100 kWh capacity

Incentives progressively reduce for larger incremental battery sizes

Quoting, customer disclosures, and financial modelling will need to reflect the revised BSTC structure from 1 May 2026

These changes may impact future STC pricing, as adjustments to certificate volumes and eligibility are expected to influence market supply and demand dynamics.

4.3 SAA Special Consideration (Installation Limits)

On 19 December 2025, Solar Accreditation Australia (SAA) announced a special consideration process to support installers who may have misunderstood the application of installation limits.

This provides limited relief for eligible installations completed between 1 July 2025 and 22 December 2025, following engagement with SAA regarding failed BSTC claims.

Special consideration applies only where the installer has substantively complied with all installation limit requirements, except for same-day commissioning or sign-off timing.

Partners should review eligibility criteria, evidence requirements, and application processes in full via the SAA website .

5. Vintage 2025 Cut-off Reminder

As we approach the 30 th of June 2026 VEU deadline for vintage 2025 - Partners are reminded to submit all 2025 jobs to us via Bridge Select by COB Friday 1 st of May 2026 to ensure that we meet the regulator cut-off date.

Based on prior experience with last-minute submissions, partners are strongly encouraged to lodge claims and respond to Requests for Information (RFIs) as early as possible. Early submission allows sufficient time for validation and issue resolution and helps minimise the risk of delays or missed eligibility.

6. SIGENERGY - Inverter Product Recall

Please note that Sigenergy released an announcement on a product recall regarding the single phase 8/10/12KW energy controllers (inverters) with quick connect AC plugs (requiring ferrules and crimping)

The recall relates to a potential issue where the AC plugs may overheat and become damaged, which could pose a fire risk. Here is the official recall notice published on the ACCC Product Safety Website - <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/search-consumer-product-recalls/sigenstor-ec-80100120kw-sp-au-energy-controllers>

For more information, consumers should contact Sigenergy Australia Pty Ltd via email at sigenservice.au@sigenergy.com or visit <https://www.sigenergy.com/au/ac-replacement/end-user>

Closing Remarks

At Northmore Gordon, we remain committed to working collaboratively with our partners to uphold scheme integrity, minimise compliance risk, and support efficient certificate creation.

If you require assistance, please contact our Compliance Team on compliance@northmoregordon.com or call us on 03 9046 1914

We look forward to working with you throughout 2026.

Kind regards, Northmore Gordon Compliance Team

How to use this information now

For current use, confirm the applicable scheme rules, regulator notices, market date and reporting period. Keep historical prices or forecasts separate from present quotes and verified outcomes.

Separate source-reported facts from forecasts, targets and commentary. For a current project, retain the official source, version, effective date, assumptions and decision record in the evidence file.

Related guidance

Environmental certificates

Government schemes

Energy audits

Solar PV

Current articles and guidance

Contact Northmore Gordon

What are the main compliance areas covered in Northmore Gordon's January 2026 Compliance Update?

The January 2026 Compliance Update addresses five key schemes: Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU), Clean Energy Regulator (CER) programs, NSW Energy Savings Scheme (ESS), Peak Demand Reduction Scheme (PDRS), and Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGC). The update helps Deemed partners reset and maintain robust compliance across these regulatory frameworks as they enter 2026. Each scheme has distinct documentation requirements, eligibility conditions, and administrative obligations that evolve throughout the year. Staying current with these updates is essential to avoid compliance gaps that could affect certificate creation, registration, or revenue recognition. Our update consolidates scheme changes so partners can systematically address requirements across their portfolio.

What is Commercial & Industrial Solar PV (Activity 47), and why does it matter for VEU compliance?

Activity 47, formally introduced in VEET Guidelines Version 14 (December 2025), is the Victorian Energy Upgrades pathway for commercial and industrial solar photovoltaic installations. It creates a distinct, regulated process for C&I solar projects separate from residential pathways, establishing specific competency requirements, design accreditation, installation qualifications, and safety assessment protocols. The activity matters because it expands VEU's eligible scope while imposing higher safety and professional standards, including Solar Accreditation Australia (SAA) design accreditation and Licensed Electrical Inspector assessments. Partners installing C&I solar must understand Activity 47's specific record-keeping, inspection, and evidence requirements to create valid VEECs. We can help partners assess whether their projects align with Activity 47 conditions and ensure evidence files meet the regulator's audit standards.

What competency and accreditation requirements must personnel meet for C&I Solar PV installations under Activity 47?

The lead solar system designer must hold current Solar Accreditation Australia (SAA) accreditation in either Grid Connected PV (Design Only) or Grid Connected PV (Design & Installation). All personnel conducting onsite installation or related work must complete an approved Working at Heights unit of competency and hold a valid White Card (Construction Induction training). These requirements reflect the safety complexity and hazard profile of C&I installations, which typically involve larger systems, higher voltages, and greater risk than residential work. Partners must verify and retain evidence of

these qualifications before works commence. Non-compliance can result in rejected VEEC applications or regulator enforcement action. Our compliance support can help partners verify personnel accreditation status and ensure evidence is properly documented.

How have VEU program fees changed from 1 January 2026, and what does this mean for project economics?

The fee for VEEC creation and notification increased from \$2.33 to \$4.35 per certificate effective 1 January 2026—an 87% increase. This applies to all VEECs created on or after 1 January 2026, while projects created before that date retain the previous fee. For a 100-VEEC project, this adds \$200 to creation costs. The fee increase does not affect VEEC value or customer revenues but reduces net proceeds to partners and advisors, narrowing project margins. Partners must refresh their cost models and investment cases to reflect the higher creation cost. When building cases for 2026 projects, partners should compare the economics against the \$4.35 fee and clarify whether customers bear creation costs or accept reduced net proceeds. We can help partners model fee impacts and communicate revised financial expectations to customers.

What is the Licensed Electrical Inspector (LEI) requirement for C&I, Solar PV, and what compliance evidence must be retained?

The Essential Services Commission introduced a Licensed Electrical Inspector assessment checklist for C&I, Solar PV (Activity 47) installations, addressing safety hazards that pose imminent risk to people or property. The LEI must complete an inspection assessment checklist (Annexure D) before the Certificate of Electrical Safety (CoES) inspection section is finalised. Accredited Persons must retain the checklist within their project file, and the ESC may request it during audit or require it during VEEC creation. This requirement strengthens safety governance by ensuring qualified electrical professionals assess system integrity beyond standard inspection. Failure to obtain or retain the LEI checklist creates compliance risk and potential VEEC rejection. Partners must integrate LEI inspection into their installation project plan, assign responsibility for scheduling and documentation, and confirm the checklist is retained before submitting VEEC applications. We can advise on LEI engagement protocols and evidence audit procedures.

What record-keeping evidence must partners retain for C&I, Solar PV projects to satisfy VEU audit requirements?

Partners must retain a comprehensive evidence file including: consumer quote and design documentation; invoice or proof of purchase; technical datasheets for installed inverters, PV modules, and batteries; geo-tagged photos (pre-, mid-, and post-installation); monitoring portal evidence meeting VEU requirements; Certificate of Electrical Safety (CoES); Licensed Electrical Inspector (LEI) inspection checklist; Single-Line Diagram (SLD); and DNSP connection approval documentation. This evidence supports VEEC creation applications and satisfies ESC audit expectations. Gaps in any category can delay or prevent VEEC issuance. The evidence file must be organised, dated, and readily retrievable. Partners should establish a standardised template for each project to ensure no evidence is omitted. Retention periods typically extend for the regulatory life of the certificate. Our compliance support can review evidence files against the regulatory checklist and identify gaps before VEEC applications are submitted.

What did the Australian Government announce regarding the Cheaper Home Batteries Program, and how does this affect the energy-project landscape?

On 13 December 2025, the Australian Government announced a substantial expansion of the Cheaper Home Batteries Program, increasing funding from \$2.3 billion to an estimated \$7.2 billion over the next four years. This expansion signals strong policy support for residential battery deployment and is likely to increase customer interest in solar-plus-battery systems. The expansion may create higher demand for installation services, metering planning, and measurement and verification support. However, it also increases competition and may place pressure on margins if customer expectations shift toward lower

costs or higher system sizes. Partners should monitor program guidelines and eligible-equipment lists as they are published. The expansion underscores battery systems' importance in the energy-transition portfolio. We can help partners assess how expanded battery demand affects their service offerings and cost structures, and support customers in navigating battery-program eligibility and performance verification.

How will Small-scale Technology Certificate (STC) factors change from 1 May 2026, and what does this mean for battery-project economics?

From 1 May 2026, the STC factor for solar batteries is proposed to decline more frequently (every 6 months instead of annually) and at a higher rate. The factor is expected to drop from 8.4 to 6.8 for the May–December 2026 period, continuing to decline through 2030. Battery systems remain eligible up to 100 kWh capacity, with an average discount of approximately 30% across battery sizes. The more frequent and steeper decline reduces STC revenue per system, compressing project margins. Projects installed before 1 May 2026 lock in higher STC factors; those after 1 May will face lower certificate revenue. Partners should advance customer timelines where possible to capture existing factors. The declining trajectory also suggests battery-system economics increasingly depend on operational value (demand management, resilience, tariff arbitrage) rather than certificate proceeds. We can help customers model battery economics under revised STC assumptions and identify value-capture strategies beyond certificates.

What did Solar Accreditation Australia (SAA) announce on 19 December 2025 regarding installer relief, and what should partners understand about this process?

On 19 December 2025, Solar Accreditation Australia announced a special consideration process for installers who may have misunderstood installation-limit requirements. Eligible installations completed between 1 July 2025 and 22 December 2025 may receive limited relief if the installer substantively complied with all requirements except same-day commissioning or sign-off timing. This recognises genuine confusion among installers about timing protocols and offers a pathway to rectify non-compliance without blanket sanctions. The relief is time-limited and conditional on substantive compliance with all other requirements. Partners should review their 2025 installation records to identify projects that may qualify for consideration. The process highlights SAA's flexibility in addressing sector-wide compliance confusion but does not eliminate underlying accreditation obligations. Partners should document their compliance approach and reasoning to support any relief applications. We can advise partners on whether specific installations may qualify and support documentation of substantive compliance.

What is the deadline for submitting 2025 VEU projects, and why does this matter for annual compliance planning?

Partners must submit all 2025 vintage VEU jobs via Bridge Select by close of business Friday 1 May 2026, to meet the regulator's 30 June 2026 cut-off deadline for vintage 2025 projects. This deadline is firm; late submissions risk VEEC rejection or deferral to the following vintage year. The May submission date provides a buffer to allow Bridge Select processing time before the June regulatory cut-off. Missing the deadline creates operational and financial risk, as revenue recognition may be deferred or lost. Partners should establish internal tracking systems for all 2025 projects, assign ownership for submission responsibility, and schedule pre-submission evidence audits to identify gaps in advance. The deadline is particularly critical for high-volume partners or those with complex multi-site portfolios. We can help partners conduct a 2025 project inventory, verify evidence completeness, and prepare submission packages to meet the May deadline.

What product safety recall did Sigenenergy announce, and what should partners do if they have affected equipment?

Sigenenergy announced a recall for single-phase 8/10/12kW energy controllers (inverters) with quick-connect AC plugs due to a potential fire risk—the AC plugs may overheat and become damaged.

The official recall notice is published on the ACCC Product Safety Website. Affected partners should stop using the equipment immediately and contact Sigenergy Australia Pty Ltd at sigenservice.au@sigenergy.com for resolution. Partners must assess whether any installed or planned systems use the recalled equipment and communicate the risk to affected customers. Systems with recalled inverters cannot be commissioned or certified until the inverter is replaced with a compliant unit. The recall highlights the importance of verifying equipment compliance status before installation and maintaining awareness of safety notices. Partners should integrate ACCC product-safety monitoring into their procurement and installation processes. We can help partners cross-reference equipment specifications against safety recalls and advise on compliance implications for affected projects.