

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



Thursday, 6 May 2021

ACTION TAKEN AGAINST MISLEADING SOLAR SELLER

The Andrews Labor Government is warning businesses against misleading and aggressive sales tactics, after the Federal Court handed down more than \$3 million in penalties to Vic Solar Technologies Pty Ltd and its director Sunny Srinivasan for breaching the Australian Consumer Law (ACL).

The strong penalties include:

- a \$3 million penalty for Vic Solar
- Mr Srinivasan being banned from managing corporations for at least five years
- Mr Srinivasan (as sole director) being required to pay \$450,000 in penalties.

The court found Vic Solar and its director Mr Srinivasan, 31, of Southbank, contravened the ACL by making misleading representations to consumers, and failing to comply with legal protections for unsolicited consumer agreements, among the multiple findings.

The Vic Solar business model overall was also found to constitute unconscionable conduct. As a part of its strict consumer protections, the company has also been excluded from the Solar Homes Program.

Vic Solar used people employed by third parties to generate sales leads by knocking on home owners doors, advertised a false 'community bulk-buy' of solar PV systems and used the details of those who registered interest to engage in door-to-door sales that breached unsolicited consumer agreement laws.

Consumer Affairs Victoria took the case to court to protect consumers and to deter to other businesses considering these types of sales tactics.

The case ensures solar retailers doing the right thing are not unfairly disadvantaged and encourages consumers to make complaints if they believe any companies to be conducting illegitimate business.

Further information about unsolicited consumer agreements and door-to-door sales can be found at consumer.vic.gov.au/doortodoor.

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly during a door-to-door sale should report it to Consumer Affairs Victoria at consumer.vic.gov.au/generalcomplaint.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Victoria Melissa Horne

"We won't tolerate dodgy sales practices in Victoria, and this strong outcome puts companies doing the wrong thing on notice that they'll be held accountable."

"Helping Victorians to save on energy bills by going solar is a key priority for the Government, and consumers should be able to investigate installing panels without the risk of being misled or ripped off."

"I encourage consumers to keep an eye out for aggressive sales techniques and to contact Consumer Affairs Victoria if you believe you're being treated unfairly by a business."

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