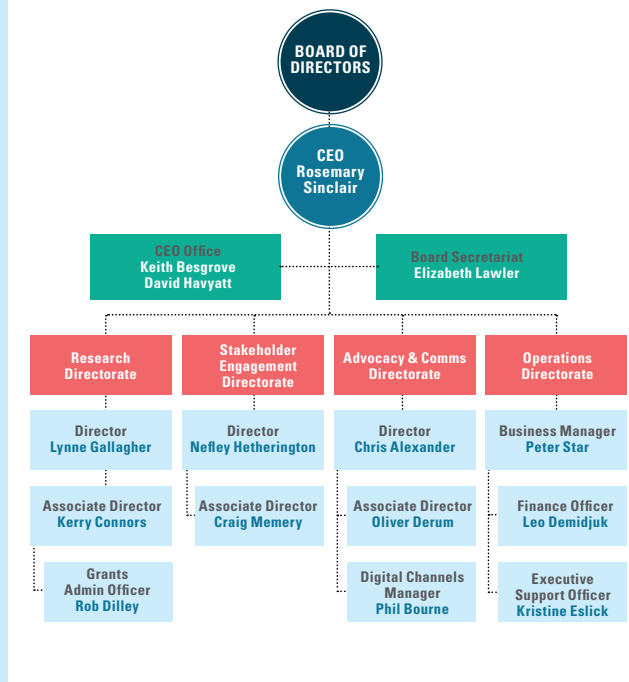


Strategic Priorities for Energy Markets

The ECA Board has used information from consultations, including with its Reference Committee and the first Foresighting Forum, to identify five Strategic Priorities for Energy Markets that will promote the long term interests of residential and small business consumers and support the move to a consumer driven National Energy Market.

- 1 Consumer preferences and decisions drive electricity and gas networks decisions and electricity and gas markets outcomes**
- 2 Consumer choice is enabled through information and innovation from retail service providers offering affordable and quality energy services**
- 3 Competition is stronger as a vibrant market for new energy services and technologies develops over the next 5 years**
- 4 Consumers participate in energy markets with confidence. Where needed, contemporary harmonised safeguards such as income support, complaints handling and dispute resolution are in place to support consumers**
- 5 Consumer interests are supported through sector Governance arrangements which promote effective competition where viable and best practice regulation of monopoly services**

Organisational Chart



Work program 2016/2017 – Strategic Initiatives

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
Develop a Long term interests of consumers framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a LTIC framework Consult with stakeholders 	July 2016 June 2017	1
SME tariff tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a SME tariff tracker Promote the tracker with small business, industry and regulators 	July 2016 Dec 2016	2
Energy Consumer Sentiment Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish the Energy Consumer Index survey Engage energy industry on the results and strategies to improve outcomes Communicate findings to governments and market bodies 	July/Dec 2016	3
Investigate the benefits of reducing disconnections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a report on the benefits Analyse jurisdictional approaches and outcomes Workshops with industry to explore processes and costs 	Dec 2016 Dec 2016 June 2017	4
COAG National Energy Productivity Plan 2015–2030 items 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver work plan for the two COAG NEPP priorities 	Dec 2016	4
Implement the 2015/16 grants review recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations implemented 	July 2016	4
Research stocktake and associated regulatory calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a Research stocktake and associated Regulatory calendar Measure use of the research and calendar resources 	July 2016 June 2017	5
An evaluation framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and implement an evaluation framework 	Dec 2016	5
Develop a panel of consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel of consultants in operation 	March 2017	5
Disseminate the outputs of ECA grants across digital channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic information available on the outputs of grants across digital platforms 	Sept 2016	5
Develop the effective governance, operations, systems, resources and platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies relating to Board, business planning, corporate, IT and other systems in place 	Sept 2016 – June 2017	

Key engagement priorities

Develop and conduct an annual Foresighting Forum that brings together the network of energy stakeholders and builds on the learnings from the February 2016 forum to:

- Share perspectives on emerging issues and upcoming processes that will engage consumers
- Understand the proposed work plan and priorities of the participants at the forum at jurisdictional and national levels
- Identify areas of common ground and possible solutions including opportunities for collaborative work programs and research.

Develop a stakeholder engagement map and report on stakeholder engagement activities

Conduct a round of Regional Consultations to better understand the views and issues of residential and small business consumers. The consultations will provide an overview of regional issues and seek feedback on priorities and opportunities for regional consumers. Where possible they will be conducted in collaboration with other stakeholders, to develop feedback that can be widely shared and to evaluate the process with a view to an ongoing program of regional consultations.

Promote effective processes for establishing common ground between consumer advocates and industry to enable streamlined approaches and expedited outcomes that meet the long term interests of consumers. ECA will research contemporary practice of consumer engagement in policy and regulatory processes building on recent work in the UK and US. The findings will be assessed for relevance and application in the Australian market to identify the steps which may be required to build skills and more effective consultative and regulatory processes.

Energy Consumers Australia

YOUR VOICE HEARD

Our role as a national body is to enable all residential and small business energy consumers to have their voices heard. We do this by working with other consumer groups to gather evidence-based research with a national perspective, distill it, and feed it back to the market so it effectively influences outcomes in the long term interests of consumers.

Our Vision

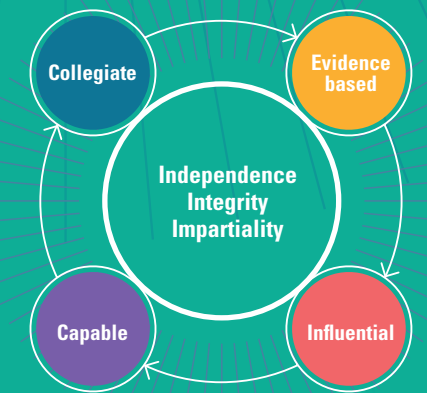
Future focused consumer driven energy markets meeting residential and small business consumers' needs.



- Energy markets that empower consumers through increasing competition, growing consumer choice, widespread innovation in product and service offerings, and widely available energy efficiency services.
- Consistently available, contemporary consumer protection mechanisms including clear information, tools to manage usage and expenditure, and easy access to redress mechanisms, reflected in growing levels of customer satisfaction and trust.
- Reduced regulatory burdens, combined with growing use of consumer/industry collaboration, to reduce associated costs for consumers.

Our Values

We value independence, integrity and impartiality. We are focused on being collegiate, evidence based, capable and influential to build strong national advocacy for residential and small business consumers.



Our Stakeholders

Our primary stakeholders are household and small business energy consumers.

We are open to engaging with the increasingly diverse group of organisations with an interest in energy policy development – advocates, government and market bodies, existing energy market participants and other organisations and businesses that currently sit outside the market regulatory framework.

We think it is also important to engage with media who help shape the national debates about energy policy and regulation.

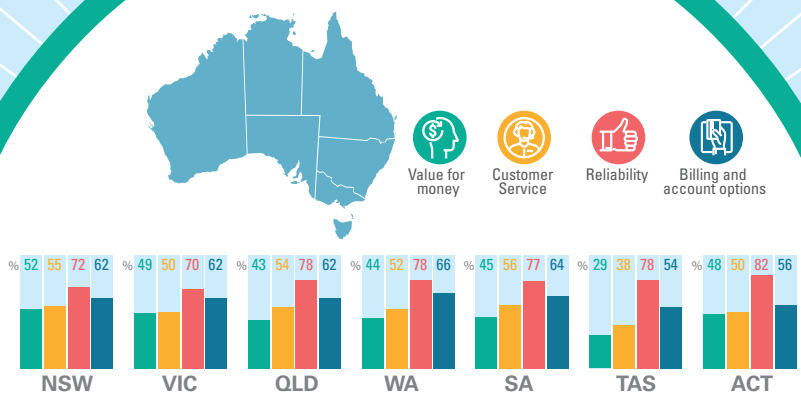


WHAT CONSUMERS ARE TELLING US: ENERGY CONSUMERS SENTIMENT SURVEY

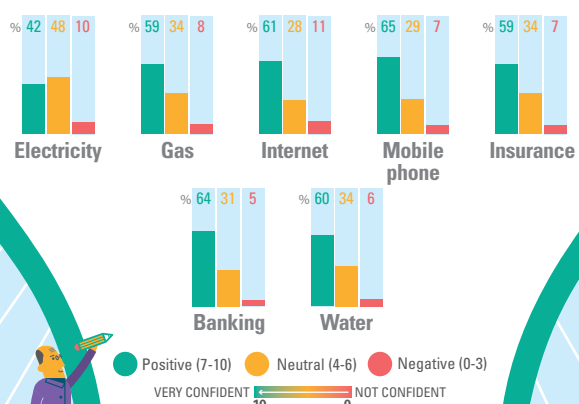
Consumer Satisfaction

In a survey of 2,500 consumers, they told us they are least satisfied with the value for money of electricity services when compared with the value for money of a range of other services, such as banking, water, mobile phone, insurance and internet services.

SATISFACTION WITH VALUE FOR MONEY



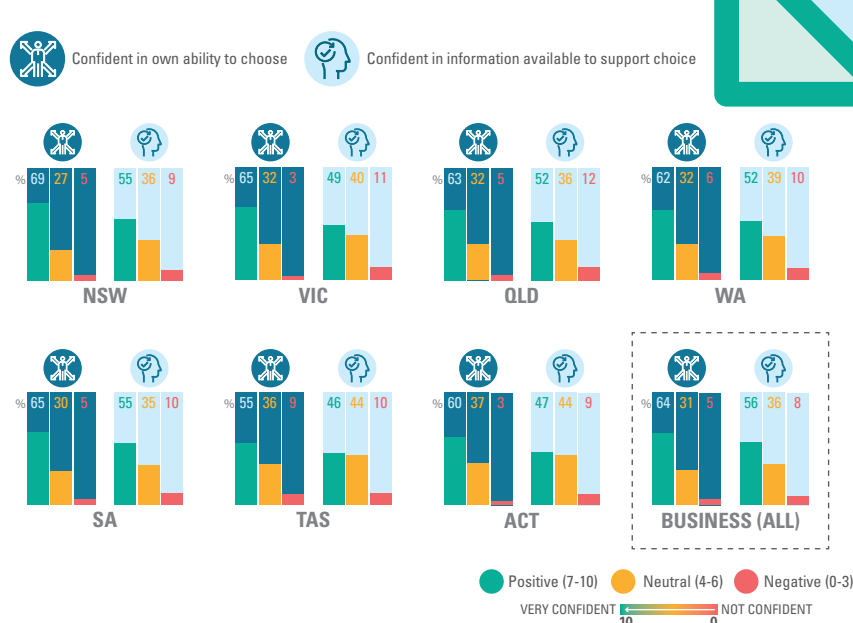
COMPARING SATISFACTION WITH OTHER SERVICE TYPES



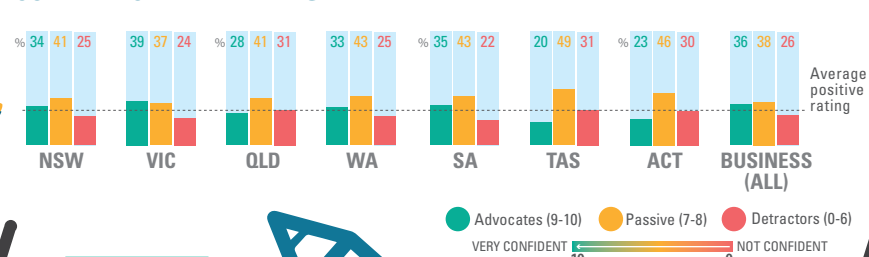
Consumer Confidence

Consumers told us they are confident in their ability to choose the energy products and services that are right for them but less confident that information is available to help them make good decisions. They also have very low confidence in the energy market overall.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN MAKING CHOICES



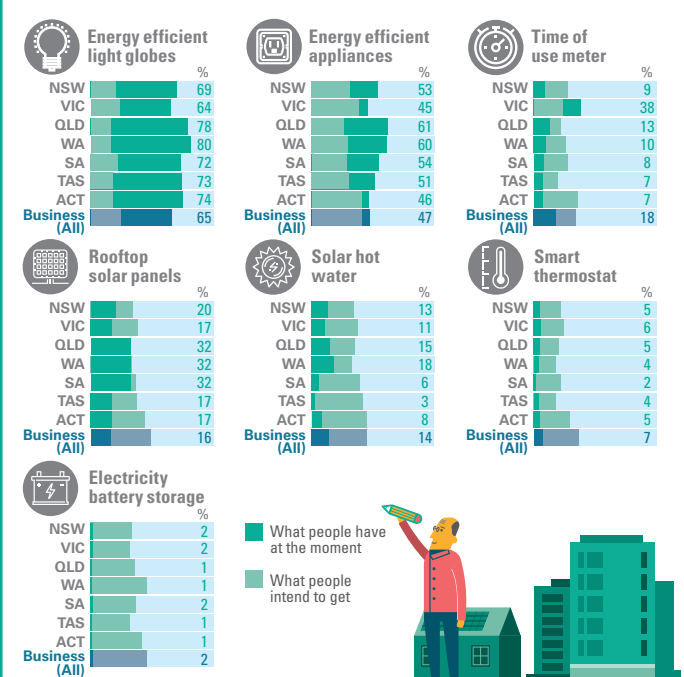
CONFIDENCE IN THE ENERGY MARKET



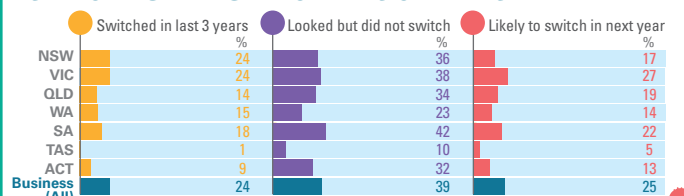
Consumer Activity

Consumers are looking to energy management technologies to manage their electricity costs. Most households and small businesses have invested in energy efficient lighting and appliances and households have made significant investment in rooftop solar panels and solar hot water systems to manage their electricity costs.

UPTAKE ENERGY MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES



SWITCHING ENERGY PROVIDERS OR PLANS



What consumers and stakeholders told us in the Regional Listening Tour

Consumers want to be able to **take control** of their energy bills and use.

To do so, they want:

- Independent, easy-to-understand standardised tools so they can make informed choices
- To choose what happens with the (excess) energy they produce

They want to take control because they don't think anyone else (energy businesses, government) is on their side or cares about the future of the planet.

Bills are too high, which makes consumers feel even less in control and unable to respond to bills so that they fit within household or business budgets.

Consumers believe they are not getting good value. This affects their confidence in energy providers and the market operating in their interests.

- Unnecessary complexity is a concern and consumers feel it is getting worse
- Poles and wires are too expensive
- Suspicion about retailers' margins being efficient or reasonable

Renewables widely seen as positive and part of the transition to a low carbon economy, but needs to be balanced with need to ensure people are not worse off.

For more information, visit energyconsumersaustralia.com.au