



Media Release

New data on attitudes to energy by households and small businesses demand focus on affordability

Energy Consumers Australia today released the fourth biannual survey of household and small business attitudes to electricity and gas services, which shows consumers are generally satisfied with the reliability of their power supply, but not with affordability.

The survey is the biggest of its kind in Australia and was released to coincide with the Take Charge Foresighting Forum run by Energy Consumers Australia starting in Sydney today, which focusses on shifting power to consumers in the using, making and trading of energy.

The Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey shows that consumers believe they get worse value for money from their electricity provider than any other services including banks, insurance companies and mobile phones and are taking matters into their own hands.

- Only 21% of consumers nationally say they have confidence the market is working in their interests.
- Around three in ten consumers (34%) were satisfied with the value for money they receive from their electricity company, compared with 71% for banks and 69% for mobile phones.

In comparison, consumers are broadly satisfied with the reliability of their electricity services.

- Between 60% and 70% of consumers are saying theyre satisfied in every state and territory in the National Electricity Market.

Consumers are telling us clearly in the results of this survey that their primary concern is affordability, suggesting that while investment is needed, care should be taken not to spend more than necessary on new generation or upgrading and maintaining the poles and wires.

Decisions by market planners, regulators and operators should be made with affordability for households and small businesses front of mind; and energy companies need to do much more to make electricity affordable for households and small businesses.

The survey also found that consumers are prepared to be part of the solution with considerable interest in new home energy management solutions:

- Over 5% of people have already purchased a home energy management system, and a further 20% looking to do so.
- Battery storage interest is high with around 30% considering procuring the technology.
- Around half of those surveyed say they are prepared to lower their energy use to help avoid an outage on hot summer days without a reward and another quarter would do so for a small financial reward.

Quotes attributable to Rosemary Sinclair, CEO Energy Consumers Australia

“Consumers are telling us clearly that their primary concern is affordability and not one more dollar should be spent on new generation or the poles and wires than is necessary.”

“People want comfortable homes, competitive businesses and bills that dont make them so anxious that they put off opening them.”

“Affordability must be a fundamental constraint on our decisions about this market.”

“Consumers are reaching for control and choice, but have little confidence the market can deliver, so they are taking matters into their own hands.”

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