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**COSBOA investigating energy bill shock for small business**

Today, COSBOA is launching a national survey of small businesses, to investigate the impact of energy bill shocks and price rises on small business.

Peter Strong, CEO of COSBOA stated ‘we are tired of the on-going debate around the energy crisis. The government has a plan which the great majority of people agree on, so let’s do it. For our part we will gather information to better inform the debate and bring facts on the effect on business people to the table. Thanks to our supporters, as highlighted below, we can do that if enough business people complete the survey and also become a case study, anonymously if they wish. Then we can better inform policy and our advocacy.”

The survey follows the release of the ACCC’s retail electricity pricing inquiry, which suggested electricity retailers may be price gouging Australian small businesses through their use of ‘standard offers’. These standard offers were found to lack transparent pricing and charged businesses well above market rates – often even higher rates than charged to households.

Small businesses could be saving $1000 - $3,500 per year by moving from ‘standing offers’ to median market offers, according to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMC) – and COSBOA wants to work with its members to achieve these savings.

**The national survey forms part of COSBOA’s new advocacy project on small business energy costs, funded by Energy Consumers Australia and the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman’s Office.**

**The project is set to address energy bill shock for small businesses and to help ‘future proof’ them against rising energy bills and predatory pricing.**

As part of this project, COSBOA is investigating ways to provide better quality information about electricity costs in different industries and how to ensure time-poor small business owners can get more support and tailored advice to help them cut their energy usage and electricity costs.

Small businesses are invited to participate in the national survey, which takes 7 minutes to complete by visiting <https://www.research.net/r/COSBOAenergy>. The survey results will be used to advocate for policy and regulatory changes, and to develop simple tools, with industry-specific tips and info, to help small businesses in a range of sectors reduce their energy costs.

As highlighted in the ACCC’s recent report on electricity retail pricing, small business owners are the forgotten people in the broken national energy market, often paying much higher rates than residential households for exactly the same power use.

One of the small business owners COSBOA interviewed as part of the project, a café in Byron Bay NSW, said “I’ve seen our power bills go up every single month since we opened a year ago, and I can only see it getting worse. There has to be a better way for small businesses like mine to have some real purchasing power in the electricity market, not just be at the whim of the retailers.”

“Clearly, there is currently very little transparent information available to small businesses to allow them to compare prices and products, and in many cases uncovered by the ACCC they are being gouged” said Peter Strong, CEO of COSBOA.

Preliminary results of the project will be released at COSBOA’s National Summit in Sydney on 30 and 31 August.

Survey link - <https://www.research.net/r/COSBOAenergy>

**Peter Strong is available for interview.**

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