

Media Release

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Almost half of small businesses “significantly impacted” by energy bills, new survey finds as National Roundtable convenes in Canberra

Leaders from across Australia’s small business sector have gathered in Canberra for a two-day Small Business Energy Roundtable to address the growing energy challenges and opportunities facing small businesses.

Co-hosted by Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) and the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA), the Roundtable coincides with the release today of the ECA’s [*Small Business Energy Consumer Survey*](#), a national study of over 750 small business energy consumers.

The survey reveals that 44% of small businesses report that rising energy costs have significantly impacted their financial performance over the past 12 months. This comes at a time when small businesses are squeezed by the rising costs of goods / inflation (58%) and reduced customer demand linked to cost-of-living pressures (47%).

“Small businesses are the engine room of the Australian economy, yet many are facing the squeeze with a complex and costly energy market,” ECA Chief Executive Officer Dr Brendan French said. “Business owners want to take practical steps to cut their energy bills, including electrifying, but face a range of structural barriers to doing so.”

Key survey findings:

- **Market complexity.** More than half (54%) of small businesses evaluate their energy plan once every few years or less, with around 1 in 5 (18%) saying they never check if they are on the best deal. More than a quarter (28%) also say they don’t know which tariff they are on.
- **Structural barriers.** 54% of small businesses lease or rent their premises, limiting their ability to make major structural energy upgrades. Only 37% have control over external structural works, like installing solar panels.
- **Switching readiness.** 55% of gas-connected businesses would likely switch to an electric appliance when their gas appliance fails, citing financial incentives as the biggest enabler.

“Small businesses want to get on with running and growing their businesses, not spending their time navigating a complex energy market,” Dr French said.

“Governments must provide small businesses with the accessible information, legal protections and practical supports needed to remove the structural barriers holding them back. This will give small businesses the confidence to cut their energy costs and invest where it makes commercial sense for them to do so.

“All governments have a real opportunity to ensure Australia’s small businesses get a fair deal for the energy they use. We hope this Roundtable is a major step in the process to helping achieve that.”

COSBOA Chief Executive Officer Skye Cappuccio said the survey data underlines the huge challenges Australia’s small businesses are currently facing.

“Together with cost-of-living pressures, fuel bills and other compounding factors, energy costs are causing huge financial stresses for Australia’s small businesses,” Ms Cappuccio said.

“Small businesses are critical to the national economy and it is vital they are given the right opportunities and solutions to thrive. That’s what this Roundtable aims to help achieve.

“COSBOA is focused on championing the rights of small businesses. We were delighted to be part of this Roundtable and look forward to collaborating further with ECA and other advocates on the issues it raises over the coming months.”

For interview requests and more information, contact Energy Consumers Australia Senior Media Manager Stuart Turner on 0415 403 208 – media@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au

Editor's notes

Energy Consumers Australia is the independent, national voice for residential and small business energy consumers. We enable residential and small business energy consumers to have their voices heard.

ECA's **Small Business Energy Consumer Survey** was a survey of 759 small business energy customers, conducted by 89 Degrees East. The survey was conducted between 13 April – 10 May 2026. Click [here](#) to view the survey results.

