

Deep Dive

Understanding the diversity of consumers and their experiences of the energy system

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Consumers Edition

19 April 2024 | 1pm – 2pm



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet, live and work today, and we pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Webinar Objectives

1. Build the energy sector's understanding of the barriers CALD consumers face when trying to interact with the current energy system and take part in the transition to renewables.
2. Disseminate ideas developed by CALD people on how to support CALD communities through an energy transition narrative and policies that reflect their priorities, needs, concerns and values.
3. Inform policy makers' agenda and future work, and support more inclusive decision-making processes in the journey to net zero.



Key takeaways

Appropriate effort to listen and understand CALD perspectives is crucial; CALD people cannot be considered *hard to reach* by energy industry and governments.

CALD consumers must be able to access the services, information and support they need in a language they prefer through the sources they trust.

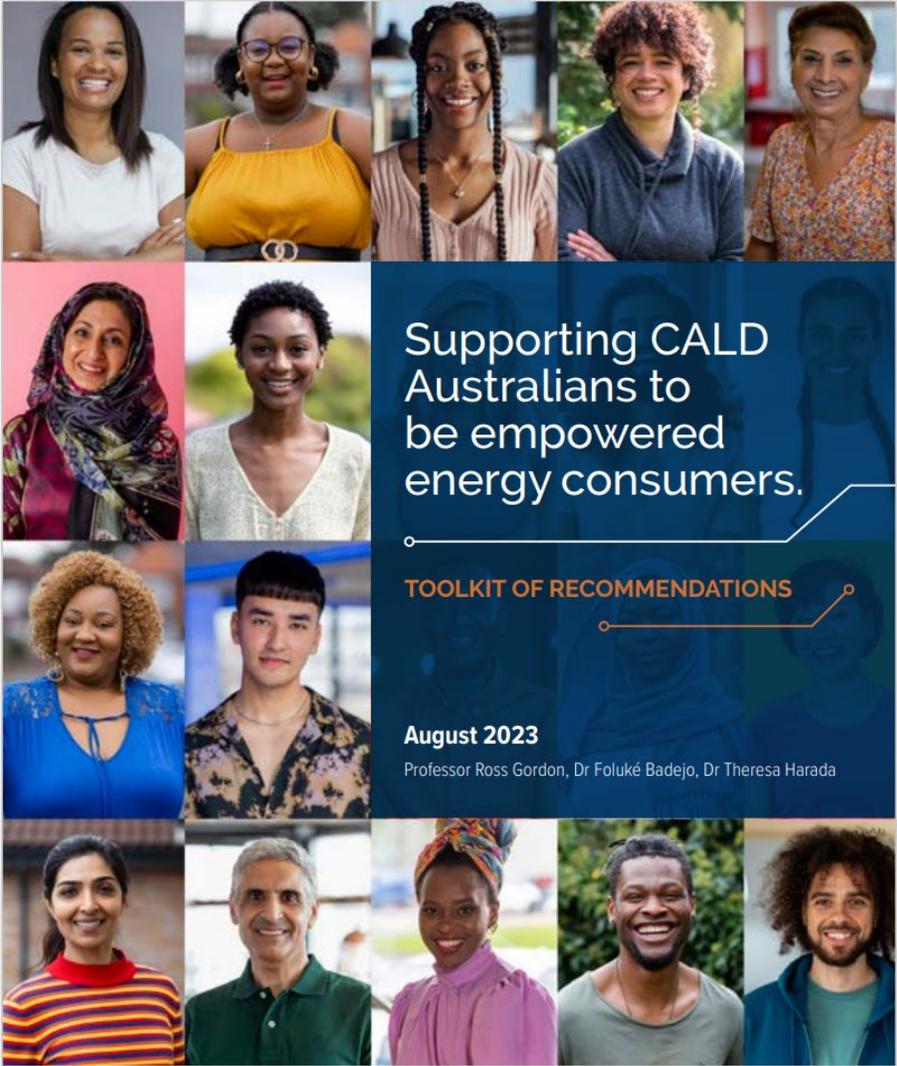
CALD engagement/education through grassroots organisations provide safe and trusted spaces for people to share their concerns and build confidence to take part in the net zero journey.

Agenda

Time	Topic
10 min	Context and Background <i>Carol Valente, Energy Consumers Australia</i> <i>Reverend Alimoni Taumoepeau, Team Leader for Intercultural Ministry and Climate Action</i>
15 min	Overview of Insights Report <i>Carol Valente, Energy Consumers Australia</i> <i>Asha Ramzan, Sydney Community Forum</i>
15 min	Panel discussion with <i>Brendan French, Energy Consumers Australia</i> <i>Asha Ramzan, Sydney Community Forum</i> <i>Ibtisam Hammoud, Voices for Power Leader</i> <i>Professor Ross Gordon, University of Technology Sydney</i>
10 min	Audience Q&A - <i>Please submit your questions via the Q&A feature in Zoom.</i>
5 min	Close

Why this study?+

1. CALD households face aggravated structural and systemic socio-economic disadvantages and encounter challenges in greater proportion than the average Australian household, being more likely to be left behind in this transition to net zero.
2. There's limited research on opportunities and solutions to ensure CALD consumers are brought along the energy transition.
3. Adding to QUT's work, we wanted to better understand what these recommendations mean, how they can be successfully implemented, and how they may change day-to-day interactions and services in the energy sector.



Supporting CALD
Australians to
be empowered
energy consumers.

TOOLKIT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

August 2023
Professor Ross Gordon, Dr Foluké Badejo, Dr Theresa Harada

QUT Queensland
University
of Technology

The Journey



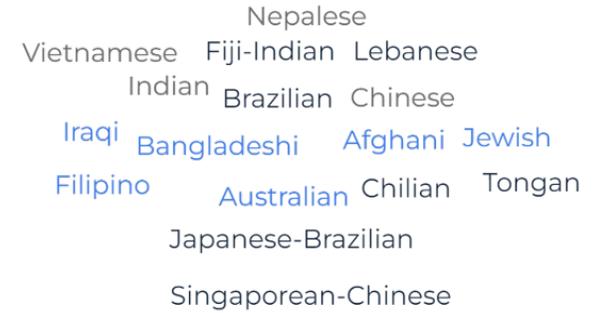
Whom we heard from



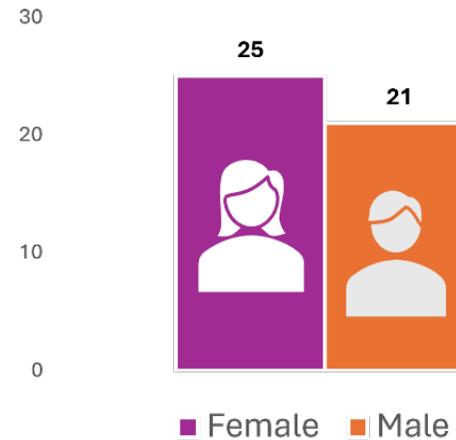
Languages



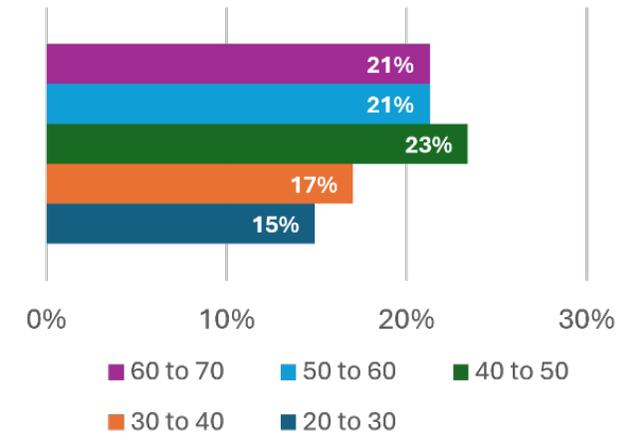
Ethnonationality



Gender segmentation



Age Group



Our Deep Dive Insights

**What do you want
the Energy Minister
Chris Bowen to
know about you and
your energy needs?**

Access to renewables.

Unaffordable energy bills are breaking me.

Everyone must be able to access renewables.

Address cultural energy needs.

All of the above! Start working now.

Intensively work to install solar farms to mitigate climate change impacts in Western Sydney.

Identify, acknowledge and address the discrimination inherent to households that suffer with unaffordable energy bills and hot unhealthy homes.

This is the opportunity to build back better with the energy transition – reduce the impacts of climate change for everyone and make it inclusive and equitable.

Cleaner, resilient and healthier environment for future generations.

We're ready for tough conversations and want to be part of decisions about the energy transition.

More accessible education about energy to newly arrived families in Australia.

Ability to access renewables and cleaner planet for future generations.

Better quality, thermally efficient and healthy houses prevent illnesses. House is as determinant of health.

Many CALD communities are culturally attached to the use of gas in cooking. We need information, outreach and raising awareness about the impacts of gas on health (especially bottled gas).

Make energy accessible and affordable to people on the pension (e.g., elderly and disability) and low income.

More investment in solar panels (consumer energy resources) to accelerate the energy transition.

Training about the different solar rooftop options.

Learn more about what we can expect from the government and the energy transition. Solar for renters.

In Western Sydney, climate change is not theoretical – it's already affecting quality of lives, increasing cost of living, and having a negative impacts on family relationships.

We need more assistance – from EAPA vouchers to access to renewables.

Local governments are closer to CALD communities. There should be ways for the Federal and State governments to collaborate with LGAs to support affordable housing and affordable energy for all.

Migrants are highly skilled. Use our skills to create economy of scale for the energy transition and enable CALD people to participate in the transition.

What are you doing about clean energy for rentals and high-rise buildings?

Make sure you listen to consumers better.

The ideas and opinions of CALD communities are important to the energy transition.

Create incentives for landlords to improve the quality of rental properties (i.e., energy efficiency and smart tech).

Clean energy must be affordable and accessible to everyone.

We need to help refugees and asylum seekers to access affordable energy (and better health).

Bring it on!

We matter.

Clear communication about the energy transition and its impacts is important too.

Local voices are critical to a successful energy transition.

Our Deep Dive Insights

Empathetic and accessible support through peers:

CALD consumers must be able to access the services, information and support they need in a language they prefer through the sources they trust.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

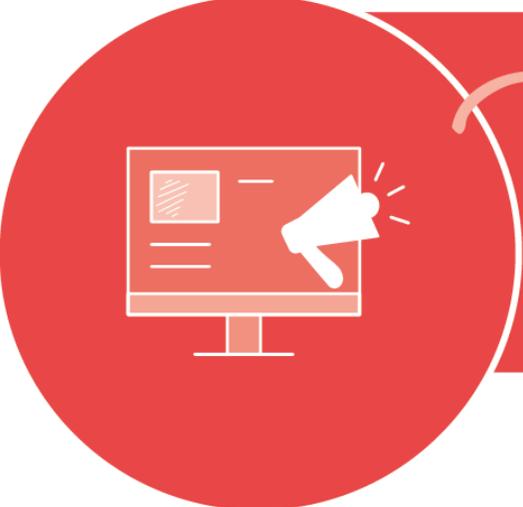
That the Commonwealth Government fund a pilot mobile Community Energy Hub in Western Sydney.

The Commonwealth Government should pilot a mobile Community Energy Hub with Sydney Community Forum by December 2024. This model of ‘one-stop-shop’ works for migrant communities; if successful, it should be rolled out in other regions, States and Territories. A mobile Community Energy Hub would:

- ✓ provide education in language and culturally appropriate ways,
- ✓ promote place-based engagement to support active participation in the transition, and
- ✓ encourage more diverse representation in energy decision-making processes.

Our Deep Dive Insights

Action-oriented and clear communications from industry: CALD energy consumers must be provided with easy-to-understand and relevant information through their bills and interactions with energy service providers to support energy costs monitoring, energy efficiency measures, and smarter management of energy consumption.



RECOMMENDATION 2:

That the Australian Energy Council and the Australian Energy Regulator partner with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community groups to improve the quality of information and assistance for CALD consumers.

2A: The Australian Energy Council, as peak industry body representing energy retailers, should

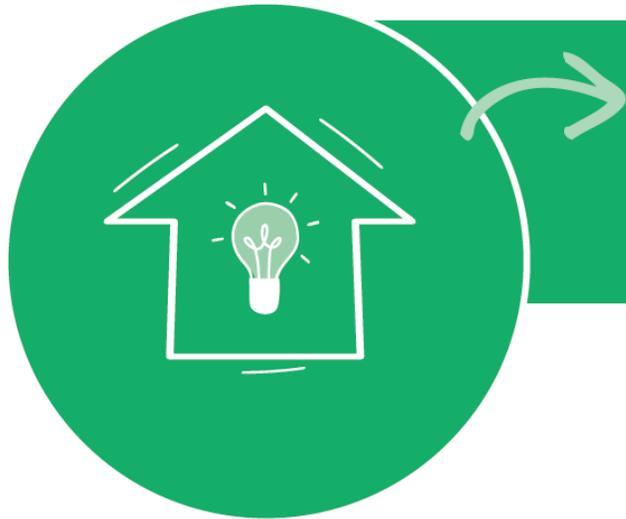
- ✓ review and update its 2021 Best Practice Resources for Energy Retailer Assistance
- ✓ establish a CALD Partners Group to improve their engagement, increase retailers' bilingual recruitment and cultural competency, and grow their capacity to reach CALD consumers through trusted voices and channels.

2B: That the Australian Energy Regulator should

- ✓ As part of its Compliance & Enforcement Priorities for 2024, encourage energy retailers and service providers to provide interpreter services within 24 hours of initial contact and at a time that suits the consumer.
- ✓ Partner with more CALD community groups to co-design its next iteration of the Better Bills Guideline, including very clear, visual communication.

Our Deep Dive Insights

An empowering net zero journey for all: CALD consumers want to have agency and feel supported to take action in Australia's net zero journey through a transition narrative that reflects their priorities, needs, concerns and values.



RECOMMENDATION 3:

Federal, State and Territory governments to advance housing reforms to improve the energy efficiency of ALL Australian homes.

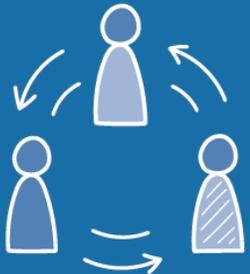
3A: That State Governments

- ✓ Mandate disclosure at point of advertisement (lease and sale) by real estate agents of a home's energy efficiency rating and its likely average annual energy costs;
- ✓ Require all new builds and major renovations to be energy efficient and all electric, with all existing homes to have a clear target to reach at least a 7-star rating (in NatHERS) and all electric by 2030;
- ✓ Establish and enforce minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties that gradually increase to a minimum of 7-star rating (in NatHERS) and all electric by 2030;

3B: That Federal, State and Territory governments work together in the 2024 update to the Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings to develop a roadmap to upgrade all rental properties, with set targets forbidding the rental of unhealthy and inefficient homes, with applicable penalties for landlords who do not comply.

Our Deep Dive Insights

Government collaboration for decarbonisation: CALD consumers want to see the three levels of government partner with CALD communities to deliver accessible and tailored programs to support decarbonisation efforts, lower bills and contribute to more resilient communities.



RECOMMENDATION 4:

All three levels of government to provide practical and targeted assistance to help decarbonise and lower energy bills, particularly for those least able to do it on their own.

As part of the consumer-focused reform package announced by the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council on 1 March 2024, the Federal and State governments should work together to:

- ✓ Provide free energy audits for low-income / cash-poor households.
- ✓ Fund local councils to provide financial incentives and/or council rate discounts for community bulk solar rooftop purchases.

Deep Dive

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Consumers Edition

Panel Discussion



Brendan French
Energy Consumers Australia



Asha Ramzan
Sydney Community Forum



Ibtisam Hammoud
Voices for Power Leader



Professor Ross Gordon
University of Technology Sydney

THANK YOU!



Access the Insights Report:



THANK YOU!



Access the Insights Report:



Sign up to ECA's newsletter

