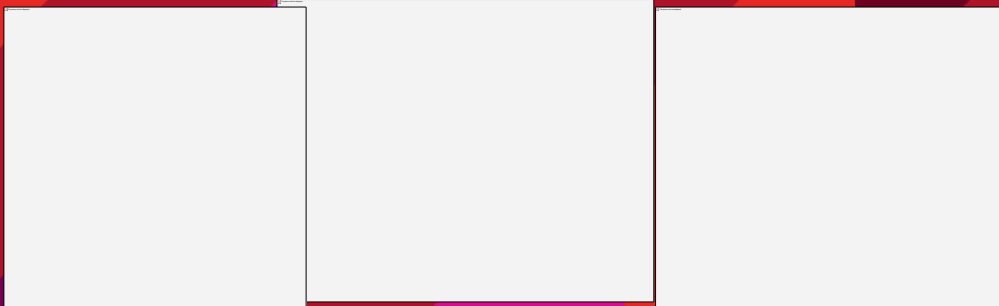


# Exploring the nexus of energy use, ageing, and health and wellbeing among older Australians

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Energy Consumers Australia Board Meeting, Sydney, Thursday  
20<sup>th</sup> August 2020



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Surprisingly, the links between domestic energy use, health and well-being, and ageing are not always well understood.

Our project address this to explore the following research questions:

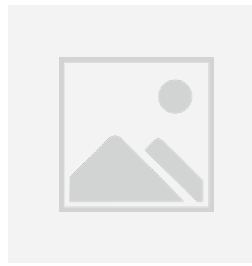
RQ1: What are the associations between domestic energy use, health, and well-being among older Australians?

RQ2: How are the domestic energy use practices of older Australians configured by their understanding and experiences of ageing, (ill)health and well-being.

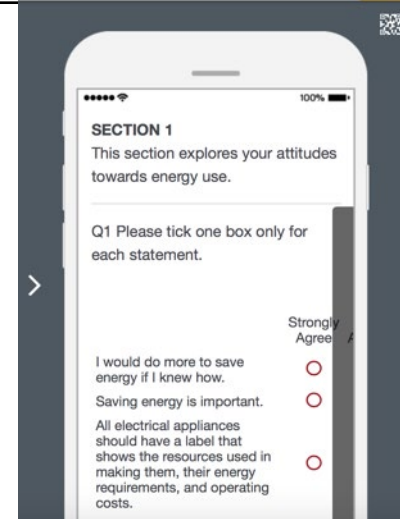
RQ3: How do older Australians negotiate the energy use challenges to manage their health and well-being?



# Research Method



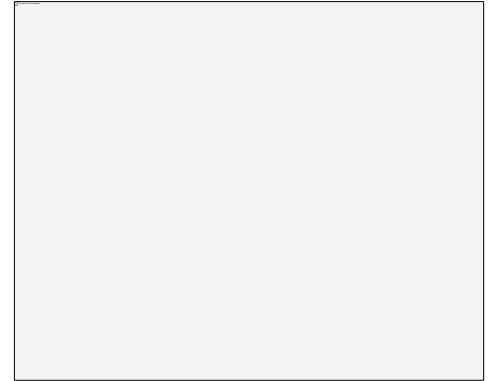
- Baseline survey of 1583 older Australians (+60 years old) in 2018.
- A follow up survey with 790 of the same cohort was then conducted in 2019 to test casual associations.
  - Tested relationships between energy use and health & wellbeing outcomes; AND relationships between health and wellbeing status and energy use outcomes.
- Ethnographies with older Australians in regional, NSW, Australia.
  - Gained insight on their lived experiences regarding energy, health & well-being.



# Findings

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Our survey analysis identified a mixture of causal associations in one direction, and bi-directional causal associations.



In some instances, health and well-being variables were causally associated with energy use variables.

In other instances, energy use variables were causally associated with health and well-being variables.

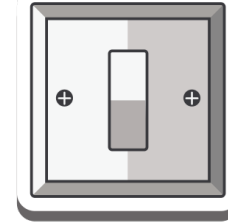
Importantly, a number of bi-directional relationships were also identified.

This provides evidence of the two-way relationship between energy use and health and well-being.

# Findings

## Preparing for increasing energy needs and costs

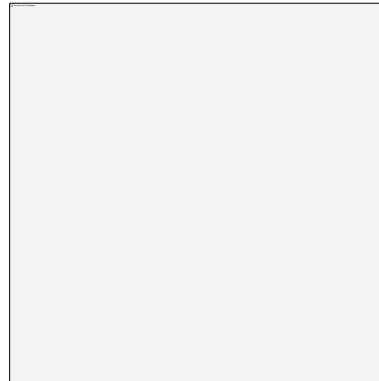
Well, we always have to try. We're both on low income. Gotta be careful like I'm careful. You just turn the lights off, and you don't let things run too long. Genevieve, 89, West Wollongong



My wife was ill for the last few years of her life, and I had to keep the air conditioning all day long. As soon as I got up in the morning at 7:00 I'd switch on the air conditioning. She'd come through and sit here and we had a table there and I put the radio on for her and then I'd go and make the breakfast. And the air conditioning would stay on all day until we went to bed about 10 or 10:30 at night. Carl, 97, Belambi

# Findings

## Energy use to support good health & well-being



I was forced into it by cooking. Doing a bit of cooking for myself. I experiment a lot. I enjoy it. Yeah, you get some good results, you know. If I buy a piece of pork belly. If you get the crackling right! That's where the computer was handy looking up recipes. Especially the first time with the pork belly, it came out real crispy you know... Zack, 89, Corrimal

The air conditioning and what is the pool always takes it up (energy) because your pool's on an extra hour or two hours a day. Plus the solar heaters on. We've got solar heating for the pool. So, it's a heated pool. We've had hip and knee replacements and the pool's good for exercising and keeping everything moving. Scott, 76, Wonoona



# Findings



MACQUARIE  
University

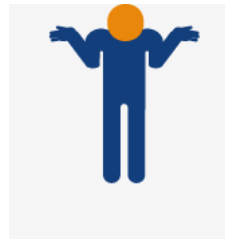
## Reflections on energy futures...

Well I really do think energy prices should be down to keep people comfortable and healthy. And that should be something they can go on because they can put food up, you can get a choice about two lots of butter or whatever. You can put food up, but energy is something everybody needs. I don't think it should be something you can't have just because you're not rich or you haven't got the money. Or you're on your own, single in a little flat somewhere. That's not fair ! Scott, 76, Wonoona

Well the government used to run them. They were doing all right. it was virtually unlimited supply of electricity at a reasonable cost. Billy, 74, Figtree

Price and reliability of supply. And into the future the reliability of supply also focuses around the cost of that energy. If the energy is going to fluctuate, well to me that's not reliable supply. That's supply at a...with a rider on it. Put it back in the hands of governments where they can regulate it not in private enterprises. They're just making out the profit. Caitlyn, 71, Balgownie

# Implications



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Clear casual associations between energy use and health and well-being that seem to operate in both directions.

Energy, health & well-being form a nexus of practices that also connect to practices of cooking, caring, leisure, socialisation, and making home.

Health issues make demands on energy use as people age.

But energy also enables people to achieve – comfort, leisure, socialisation – mental health and well-being.

Our participants demonstrate that older Australians are very knowledgeable, resourceful, and creative in managing these issues – although some do still struggle!

But - is the Australian energy market working appropriately to support older Australians in ageing successfully???



# Questions?

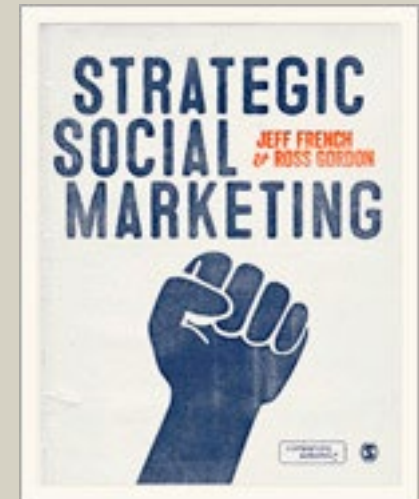


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