

# Energy Consumer Report Card

Small business findings  
Highlights report

February 2025



# Summary

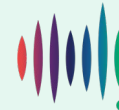


1. Cost of living and the cost of electricity are among the main concerns of business decision makers, with 87% saying they are extremely or quite concerned about cost of living and 75% saying the same about the cost of electricity.
2. Electricity is a substantial cost for most businesses with nearly 7 in 10 saying it is a significant expense and 1 in 5 considering it to be one of their largest overheads. Similarly, a majority (55%) of businesses using gas noted that it is a significant expense, with 12% of those saying it is one of their biggest overheads.
3. Nearly 40% of businesses are struggling to afford their business energy bills: 6% say it has been “very difficult” to pay their bills in the last 6 months and a further 32% have found it “somewhat difficult”.
4. Only half of businesses review their energy plans annually; more than one in ten say they “never” review their energy plan.
5. Most businesses are positive about the energy transition, with a majority saying it will be good for Australia, the economy overall, and their business. Similarly, a majority of business decision makers (52%) are interested in being a leader who promotes sustainable energy use to others in their community. But only one in four business decision makers say the government has clearly explained how the transition will impact their business.

# Background and Methodology

**Small Business survey of the  
Consumer Energy Report Card**

**December 2024**



## Background and objectives

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

The Consumer Energy Report Card survey was conducted for Energy Consumers Australia by SEC Newgate.

This new study aims to understand:

- The priorities and values of Australian energy consumers.
- Their attitudes to the energy industry.
- Levels of energy literacy as well as information sources and preferences.
- Views on pricing and market competition.
- How consumers are engaging with the energy system and the relationship they want to have with it.
- Attitudes to the transition to renewables, home electrification and the adoption of new technology.
- Satisfaction with their energy suppliers.
- Their advice on how to best meet the current and future needs of Australian energy consumers.

## Research methodology



### Fieldwork dates

27<sup>th</sup> September – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024



### Online survey

Participants sourced from a professional ISO-accredited online market research panel.



### Representative sample

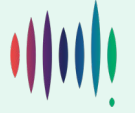
**n = 503 business decision markers across Australia**

The total sample size of 503 is associated with an overall margin of error of +/- 4.4% at the 95% confidence interval.

The target of the survey was people who are responsible for paying an energy bill and/or choosing energy products for a business in Australia.

Data was weighted according to Australian Bureau of Statistics data on business size and location. It was adjusted to take into account that not all businesses actually pay an energy bill.

# Overview of sample



	Total (n)
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>503</b>
<b>Number of employees</b>	
1	292
2-5	144
6-20	44
21-200	17
201+	6
<b>Rooftop solar</b>	
Yes	144
No	359

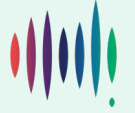
	Total (n)
<b>Business location</b>	
Metro	328
Regional	175
NSW	117
VIC	118
QLD	124
SA	59
WA	52
TAS	18
NT	10
ACT	5

# Key Findings

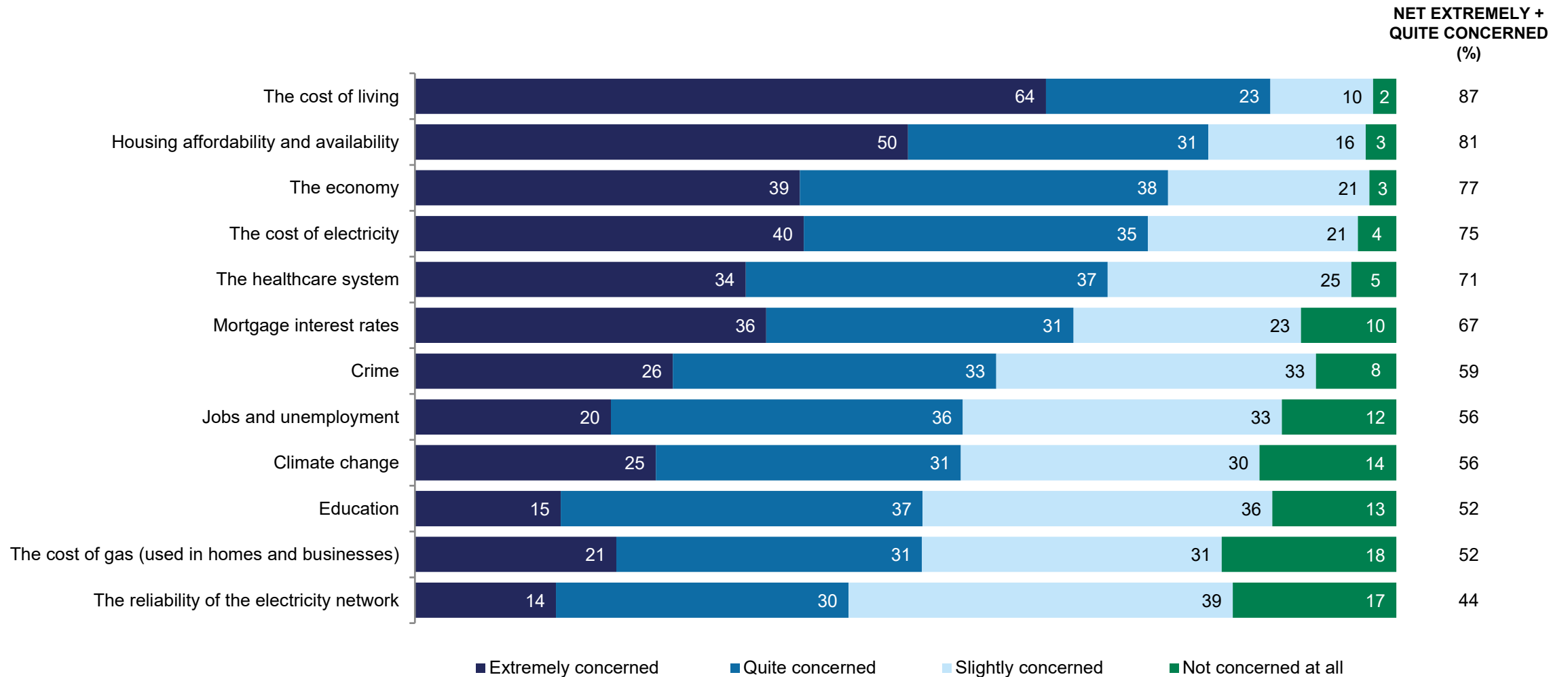
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# Business decision makers are most concerned with the rising cost of living, housing affordability, the economy and the cost of electricity



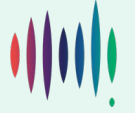
## Concern about specific issues %



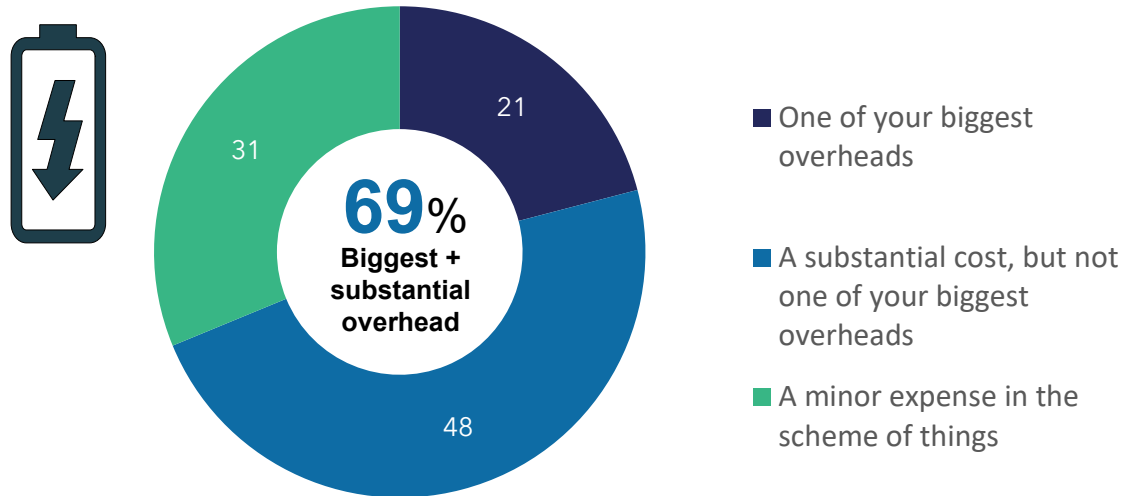
Q11. How concerned, if at all, are you with the following issues?

Base: All business participants (n=503)

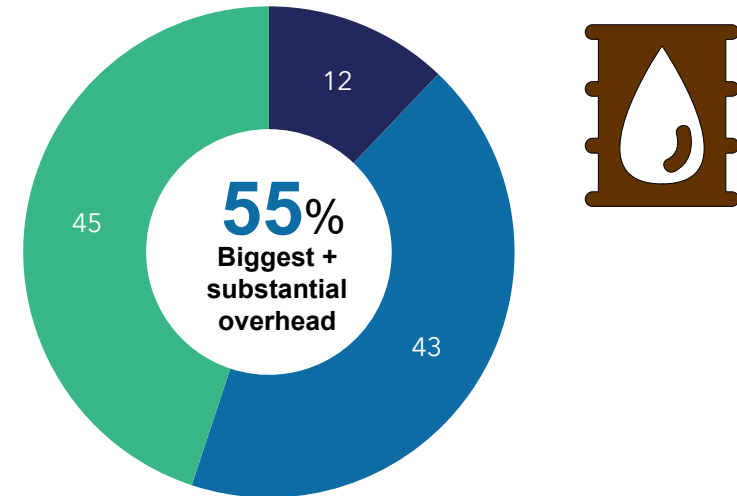
# Energy bills are a substantial cost for many small businesses



## Significance of electricity as a business expense (%)



## Significance of gas as a business expense (%)



(%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
Electricity is a substantial / biggest overhead	69	70	66	65	73	*77	60	72
Gas is a substantial / biggest overhead	55	53	*61	52	*63	*56	*53	56

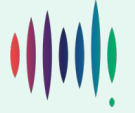
\*Caution – Low base size

Q41. How significant are each of the following costs to your business?  
Base: All business participants, Electricity (n=503), Gas (n=149)

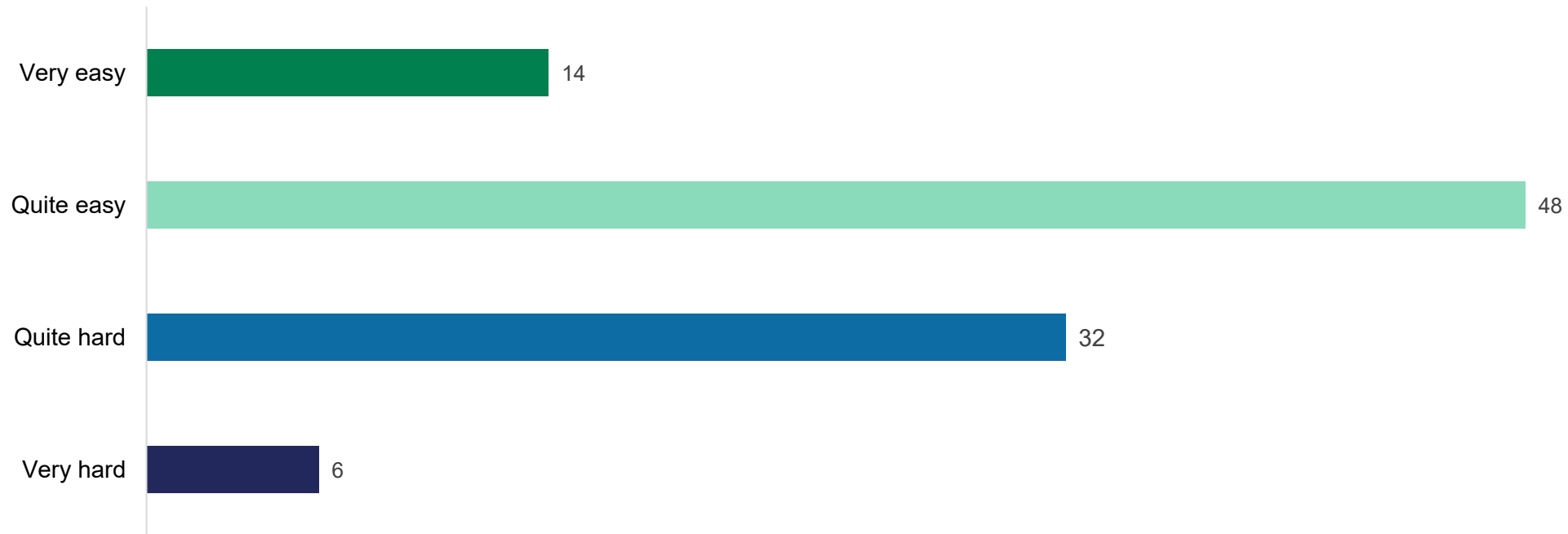
Numbers in blue font indicate the result is statistically significantly higher than the result of those not in the group.  
Numbers in red font indicate the result is statistically significantly lower



# Many businesses say it has been difficult to pay their energy bills in the last 6 months



## Ease or difficulty in paying business energy bills in last 6 months (%)

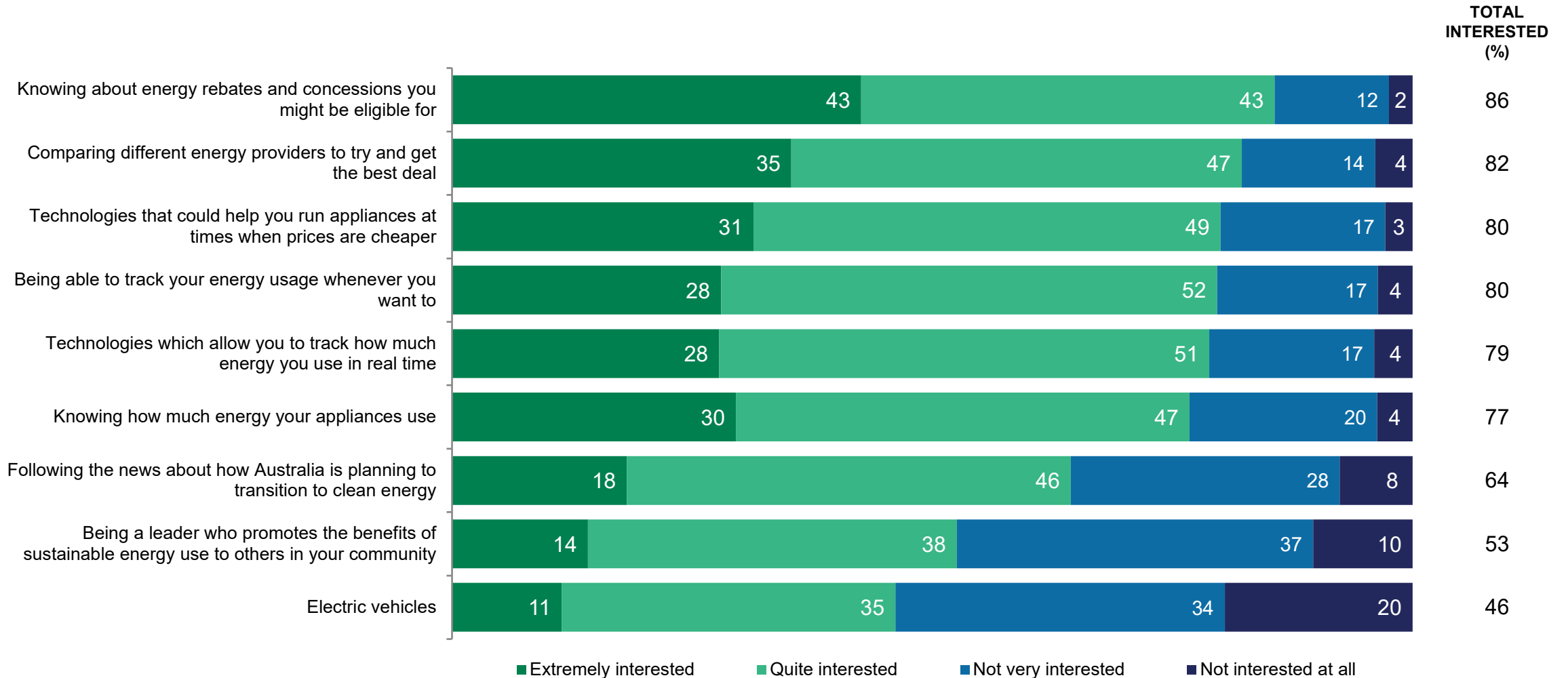
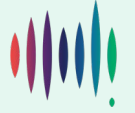


TOTAL (%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
<b>Easy</b>	62	64	58	60	62	74	65	61
<b>Difficult</b>	38	36	42	40	38	26	35	39

Q20. In the last 6 months, how easy or difficult has it been for you to pay your business energy bills (i.e. the ease of affordability for this cost)?  
Base: All business participants (n=503)

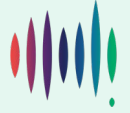
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# Business decision makers are interested in opportunities to reduce bills. They are also interested in having more data on their energy use

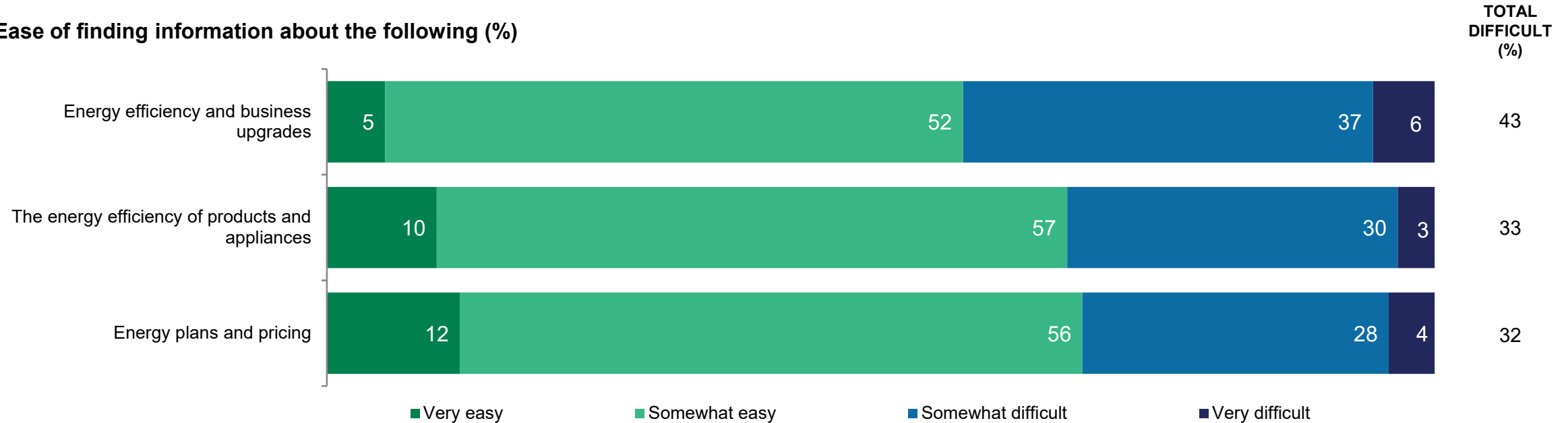


Q15. How interested are you in the following things?  
Base: All business participants (n=503)

# Some business decision makers find it difficult to find information about energy efficiency and upgrades



Ease of finding information about the following (%)

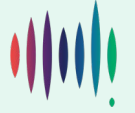


TOTAL DIFFICULT (%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
Energy efficiency and business upgrades	43	39	48	43	46	36	42	43
The energy efficiency of products and appliances	33	33	34	34	36	24	33	33
Energy plans and pricing	32	31	33	32	35	26	38	29

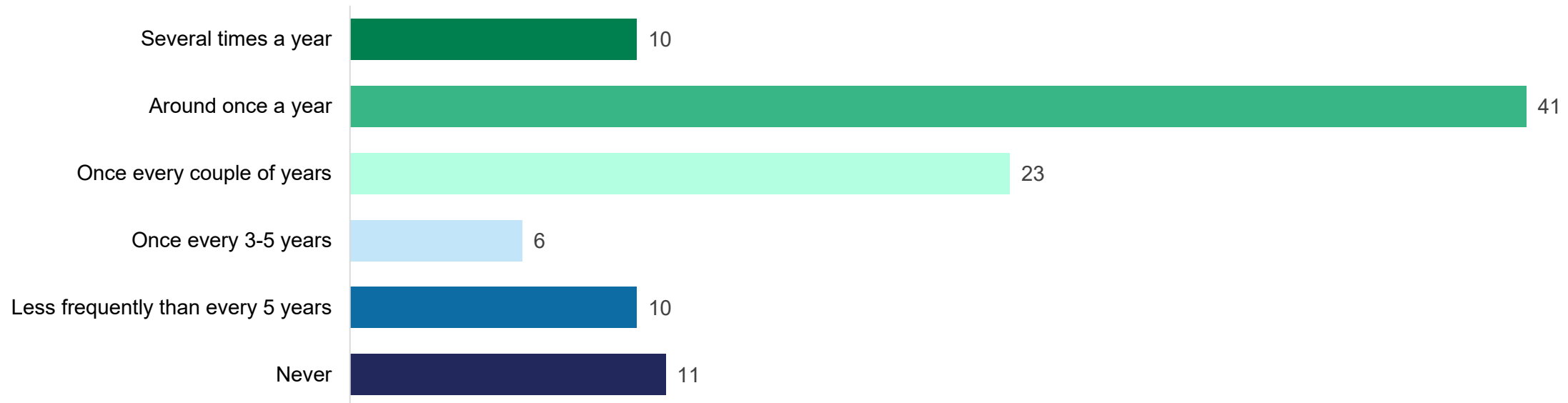
Q53. How easy is it to find the information you need about the following things?  
Base: All business participants (n=503)

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# Only half of business decision makers review their energy plan once or more a year



## Frequency of business energy plan review (%)

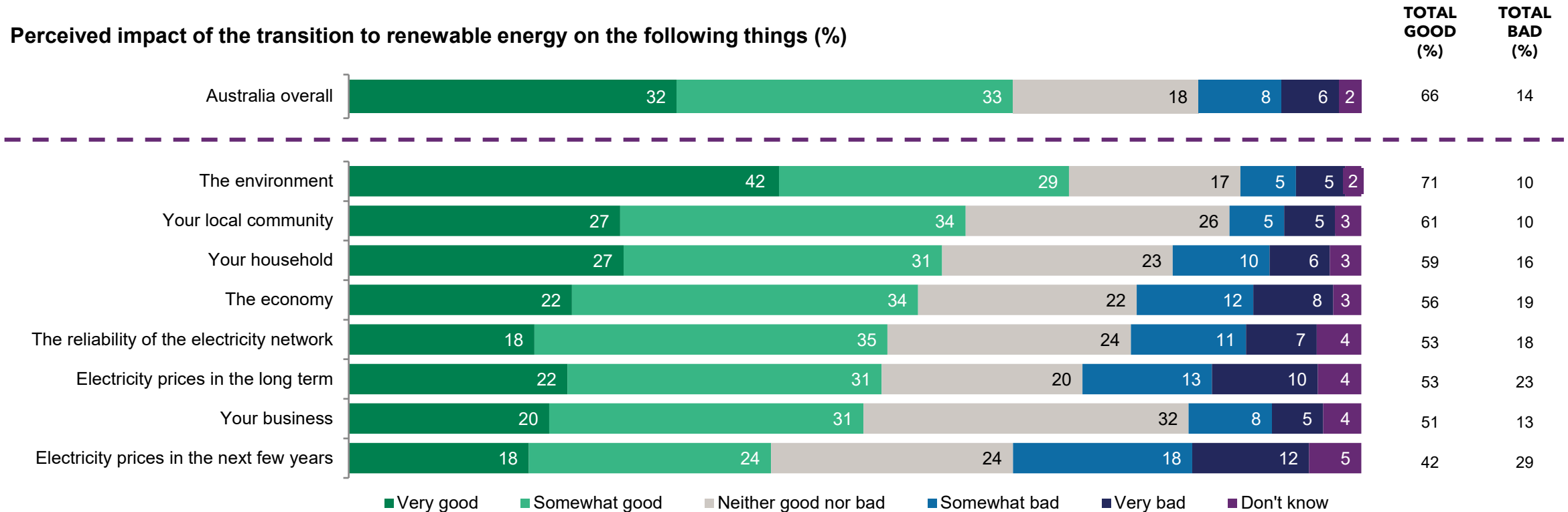
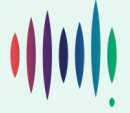


TOTAL (%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
<b>Around once or more a year</b>	50	52	48	54	53	34	57	48
<b>Less than once a year</b>	39	39	38	36	38	53	33	41
<b>Never</b>	11	9	14	10	10	13	10	11

Q51. Approximately how often do you review your current business energy plan and investigate whether there are better options for you?  
Base: Those business premisses in a competitive retailer state/area (n=412)

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# Most business decision makers are positive towards the transition, despite mixed views on its impact on electricity prices in the short term

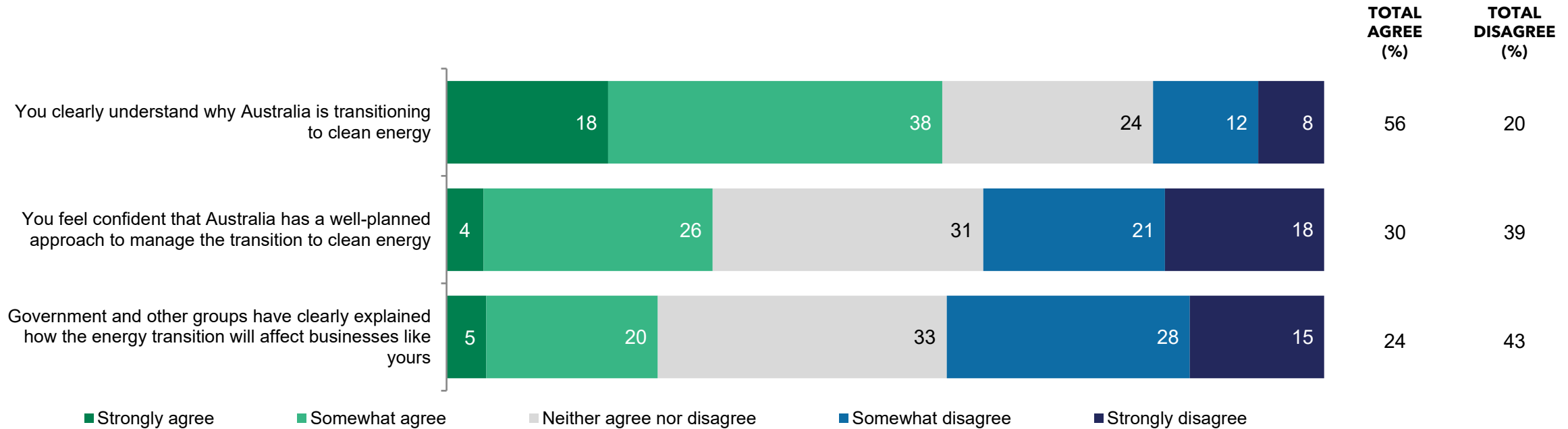
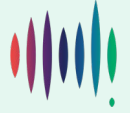


TOTAL GOOD (%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
<b>Australia overall</b>	66	66	65	66	65	67	68	65
<b>Your business</b>	51	51	51	51	47	57	57	49

Q23. Overall, do you feel that the transition to renewable energy is a good thing or a bad thing for each of the following?  
Base: All business participants (n=503)

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# Only one in four business decision makers understand how the transition will impact their business.

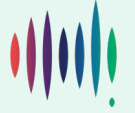


TOTAL AGREE (%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
<b>You clearly understand why Australia is transitioning to clean energy</b>	56	57	56	60	51	52	58	56
<b>You feel confident that Australia has a well-planned approach to manage the transition to clean energy</b>	30	35	21	25	33	48	30	30
<b>Government and other groups have clearly explained how the energy transition will affect businesses like yours</b>	24	27	18	20	24	43	26	23

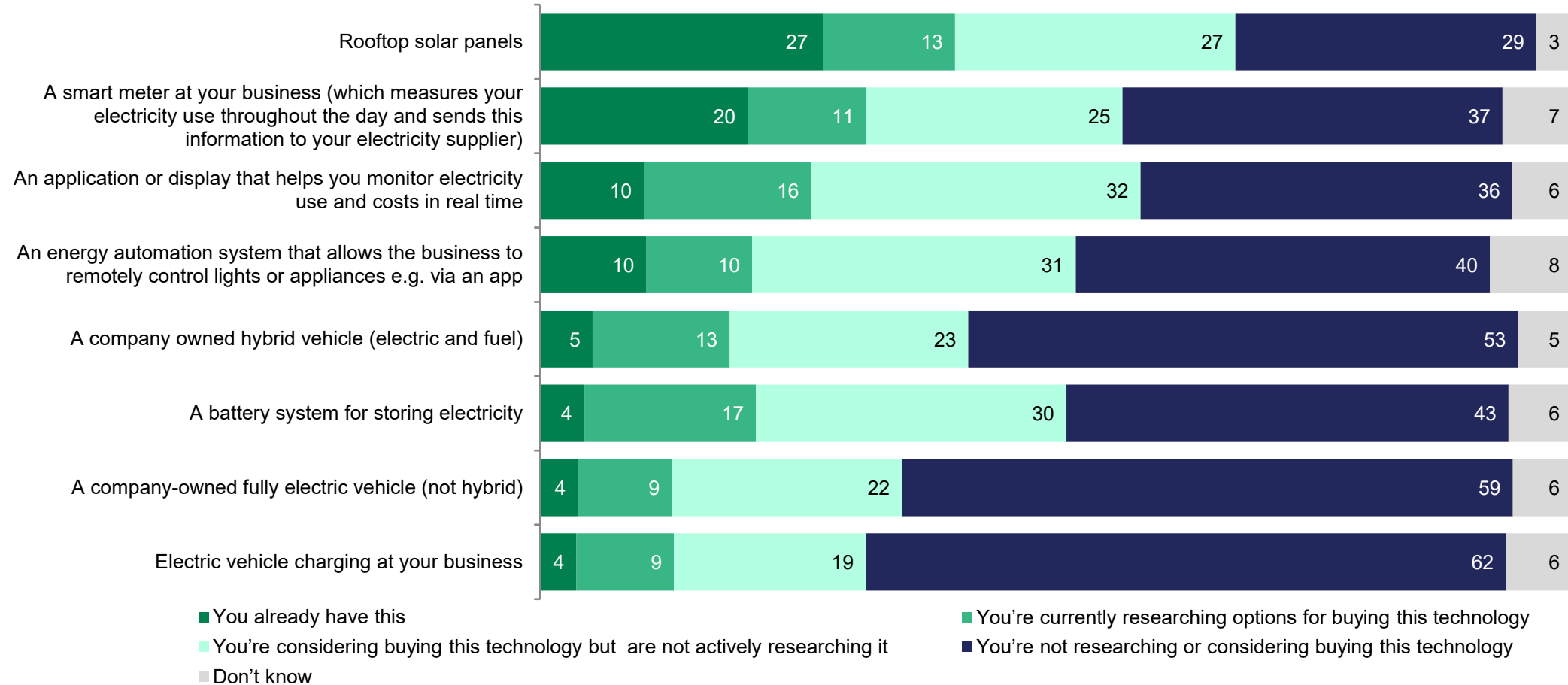
Q25. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
Base: All business participants (n=503)

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# Many businesses have, or are exploring, new technologies

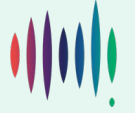


## Currently own or are considering the following technologies (%)

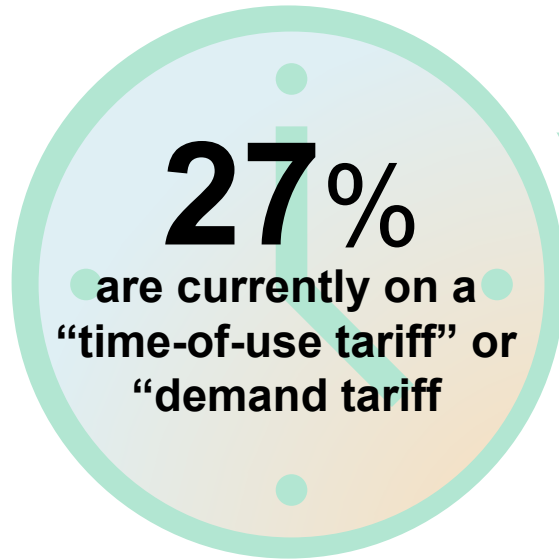


Q28b. Does your business have, or are you considering, any of the following technologies?  
 Base: All business participants (n=503)

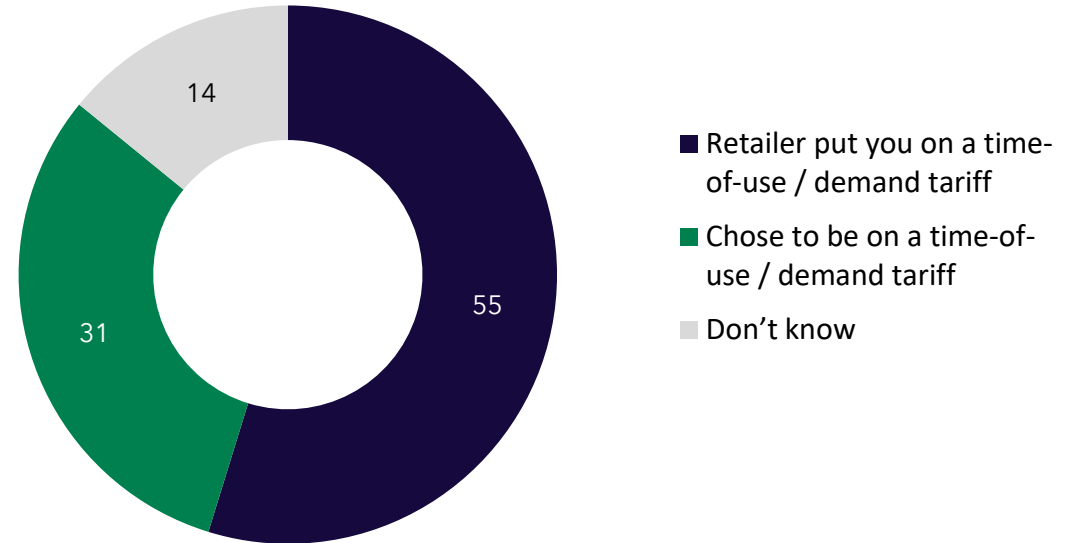
# Some businesses say they are on a time-of-use or demand tariff, but only a minority said they chose to be on it



Incidence of time-of-use or demand tariff (%)



Choice of being on a time-of-use or demand tariff(%)



(%)	TOTAL	METRO	REGIONAL	SOLE TRADER	2-5 EMPLOYEES	6+ EMPLOYEES	HAVE SOLAR	NO SOLAR
Currently on a time-of-use or demand tariff	27	24	32	27	28	25	37	24
Retailer put you on a time-of-use / on-demand tariff	55	54	56	48	64	66	46	60
Chose to be on a time-of-use / on-demand tariff	31	36	24	32	30	31	35	29

Q30. Does your business electricity supply currently involve a “time-of-use tariff” or “demand-tariff” (i.e. an electricity plan where you are charged different rates at different times of the day)?

Base: All business participants (n=503)

Q31. Did you choose to be on a “time-of-use” or “on-demand tariff” or did your retailer put you on it without your choice? Base: Those with a time-of-use or on demand tariff (n=140)

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