

# ✓ Survey of Community Views on Energy Affordability - Australia



## **Background**

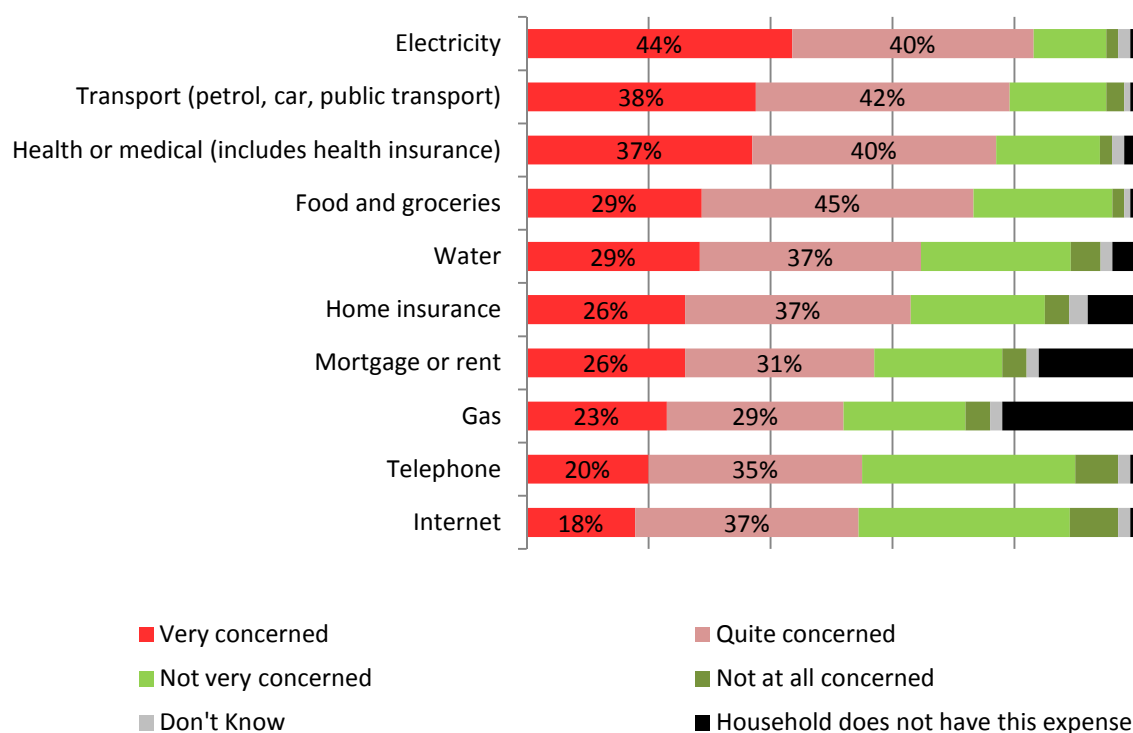
CHOICE, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Energy Efficiency Council all have the goal of improving the affordability of energy services. These three groups commissioned a joint survey on energy affordability, building on work carried out by CHOICE in 2012.

The group commissioned Essential Research to include a number of questions in its regular online surveys in late September 2013. The supplementary first question (household concern about different areas of expenses) was included in the survey from 17th to the 24th September and is representative at the National level, with 975 national respondents. The second and third questions were included in surveys over two weeks from the 17th to the 30th September 2013, and are representative at the National level and in larger states, with 2061 national respondents.

This report is a summary of national results. Other reports are available with data specific to New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

## Households are still very concerned about electricity costs

Please indicate how concerned or unconcerned you are about the current costs of each specific expense for your household: (National)



The survey indicated that 'electricity' is still the most concerning cost-of-living pressure for households. Almost 85 per cent of households were concerned about electricity costs, and 44 per cent were very concerned.

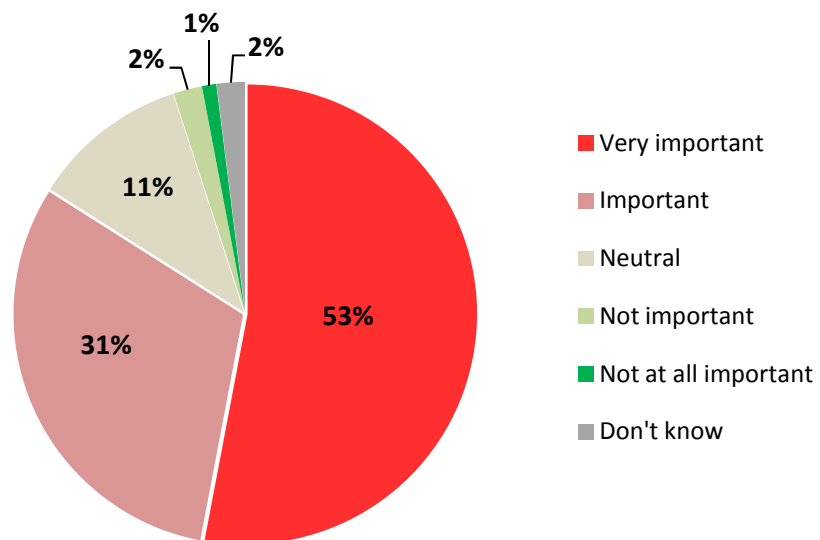
A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics report indicated that in 2012 the average Australian household spent 53 per cent more on fuel for vehicles (\$60 a week) than energy used within a dwelling, such as gas and electricity (\$39 a week)<sup>1</sup>. However, our survey found that household concern is much higher for electricity costs than transport costs. There are a number of possible reasons for this, such as:

- Electricity costs have risen much faster than transport costs in the past two years
- Most households don't know how much electricity they are using at a particular point in time, and bills are generally paid after use. This means that bills can be larger than expected and households cannot retrospectively take strategies to reduce these bills. In comparison, it is easier for consumers to see how their transport usage relates to their expenses.
- Electricity bills are generally in large quarterly 'lumps', while transport costs are often paid in small daily or weekly instalments.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013, *Household Energy Consumption Survey: Summary of Results, Australia, 2012* (cat. no. 4670.0), ABS, Canberra.

## Households want governments to act on electricity bills

*How important is it that the State Government helps reduce energy bills for households and businesses? (National)*



The vast majority (84 per cent) of Australians believe it is important, or very important, that their State Government helps reduce energy bills for households and businesses.

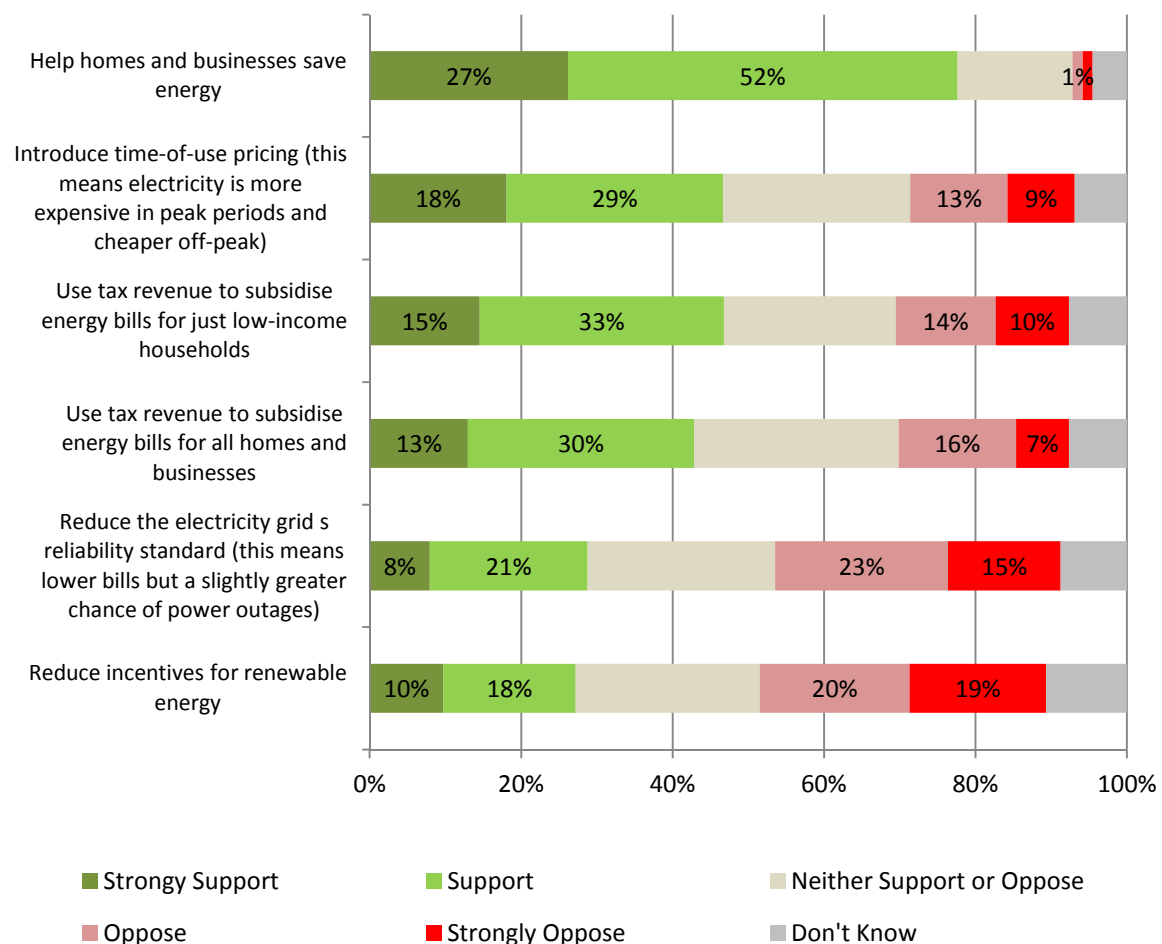
## Some strategies to reduce household energy bills are more popular

We suggested a number of options for reducing their energy bills. The most popular options were:

- Helping homes and businesses save energy - net support 76 per cent. This was by far the most popular option, with very little opposition.
- Introducing time-of-use pricing - net support 25 per cent
- Subsidising energy bills for just low-income households - net support 24 per cent

As the focus of the survey was state government policy, carbon policy was not included in the survey.

### Would you support or oppose the following ways in which the State Government could help reduce energy bills? (National)



**Would you support or oppose the following ways in which the State Government could help reduce energy bills? (national - net approval)**

