

THE IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY BILLS ON BUSINESSES IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

Compass Research is carrying out an independent survey in regional Queensland to help ascertain the impact of rising electricity prices on businesses and the economy of regional Queensland.

We are seeking responses from all types of businesses including agricultural businesses and would be grateful if you could complete the following brief survey. (*Your best estimate is better than no response*).

Confidentiality:

Responses from individual businesses **are confidential** and are only used to develop aggregate estimates of regional impacts.

To complete the survey please fill in this form or alternatively complete online at www.qeun.com.au or ring Compass Research on 40 312 970 (business hours) to complete over the telephone.

For information on Compass Research please visit www.compassresearch.com.au or the QEUN please visit www.qeun.com.au.

Start of survey: Please mark or write answers where provided.

QA. Where does your business operate?

Note: We are only surveying 4 regional centres at present:

- Mareeba Shire Council
- Mt Isa City Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Regional Queensland (*Where outside of the 4 regional council areas above*)
- South East Queensland (*Brisbane, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba*)

Q0. How does your business receive electricity bills?

- From Ergon only
- From a landlord or body-corporate
- From an electricity retailer other than Ergon
- From Ergon + another electricity retailer
- Do not receive an electricity bill

If your business is off grid, you do not need to do this survey.

Q0a. Does your business generate any of its own electricity? e.g Solar, Diesel or Petrol generation.

- Yes

- No

Q1. Has the **cost** of electricity for your business risen in the last 12 months?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure / don't know

Q2. Has the **consumption** of electricity by your business changed over the last 12 months?

- Risen
 Fallen
 Stayed about the same
 Not sure / don't know

Q3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how **concerned** are you about the ability of your business to pay electricity bills in full and on time, with 1 being not concerned at all and 10 being extremely concerned.

Please place a number:

Q4a. Are you **aware** that electricity charges for regional Queensland businesses increased on **1st July 2016** by a further **11.2%** to **15.8%**?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure / don't know

Q4b. Are you **aware** that electricity charges for regional Queensland businesses will increase on **1st July 2017**?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure / don't know

Q5. Which of the following **decisions** have you made to enable your business to **accommodate electricity costs** over the past 12 months? Have you: Please then answer the corresponding questions below where applicable.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Passed the increased cost of electricity onto your customers through higher prices for your products / services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Reduced electricity consumption through changing behaviour eg. adjusted the temperatures set for air-conditioners, heaters and hot water systems, turned off equipment and lights not in use. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Reduced electricity consumption through investment in more energy efficient appliances and equipment, eg. air-conditioners, fridges/freezers, coldrooms, irrigation pumps, lighting etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Invested in alternative electricity generation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | E. Reduced staff hours or staff numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | F. Accepted lower profits from the business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G. Increased the debt carried by the business |

A. (If Yes) Did you pass part or the full cost of rising electricity costs onto your customers?

- Partial
- Full

(If Partial) What was the resulting percentage increase in prices to your customers?

Your best estimate is better than no response.

%

A. (If No) Why didn't you pass the increased cost of electricity onto your customers?

D. (If Yes) What alternative electricity generation have you installed since **1st of July 2016**?

- Solar panels
- Solar hot water
- Battery storage for electricity
- Diesel or petrol generation
- Other:

E. (If Yes) Approximately how many staff **hours** per week have been reduced to accommodate rising electricity bills?

hrs per week

Has the reduction in staff hours resulted in the loss of any full or part time jobs?

- Yes
- No

(If Yes) How many?

Full time jobs lost

Part time jobs lost

Q6. Approximately what percentage of your total business costs is your annual electricity costs?

Your best estimate is better than no response.

Please place a number: %

- Not sure / don't know

Q7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how **satisfied** are you with the **electricity prices** being charged to your business with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied?

Please place a number:

Q8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how **satisfied** are you with the **reliability** of the **electricity supply** to your business with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied?

Please place a number:

Q9. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much **financial stress** would be caused to your business if the cost of electricity **increased again** on **1st July 2017**, with 1 being no stress and 10 being severe stress?

Please place a number:

Q10a. If the cost of electricity was **reduced** on **1st July 2017**, please select which of the following would apply to your business. **Multiple responses allowed.**

- The viability of my business would improve
- I would consider employing more staff and / or increase staff hours
- I would consider upgrading equipment and machinery necessary for my business
- I would consider expanding my business

Q10b. If the cost of electricity **increases** on **1st July 2017**, please select which of the following would apply to your business. **Multiple responses allowed.**

- I would consider investing in solar generation
- I would consider investing in diesel or petrol generation
- I would consider investing in battery storage
- I would consider reducing staff hours

Q11. Can you name any businesses (or types) in your community that are especially affected by rising electricity costs?

Demographics

Q12. What type of business do you own or manage? Please describe in a few words. *(For farming businesses please specify the crop or animal which is your primary source of income).*

Q13. What is the postcode of your business?

Q14. How many staff are usually employed including owners?

Full time

Part time

Casual

Q15. Is your business locally owned or a branch office?

- Locally owned
- Branch office

Q16. Do you rent or lease all or part of your place of business or farm?

- Yes
- No

Q17. What is the approximate annual gross turnover of your business:

(Annual gross turnover is the annual sales revenue)

- Under \$500,000
- \$500,000 to \$1M
- \$1M to \$5M
- Over \$5M

Q18. How many electricity bills for different accounts do you receive for your business monthly or quarterly? *(For example, a farm business can have different accounts e.g machinery shed, irrigation pump and home office and thus receives 3 electricity bills for the one farm business.)*

Q19. What are the tariffs listed on your electricity bills? **Multiple responses allowed.**

Q20. Do any of the electricity bills received by your business include a portion for home consumption?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / don't know

Q21. What is the annual power bill of your business?

Your best estimate is better than no response.

\$ per year

- Not sure / don't know

Q22. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you believe the **economy of your regional community is impacted** by rising business and household electricity bills, with 1 being not impacted and 10 being severely impacted?

Please place a number:

CONFIDENTIAL

To help with any clarifications can you please provide contact details.

Business name:

Contact name:

Contact tel no:

If you would like to receive a copy of the Survey Report on the four regions of Mareeba, Mt Isa, Southern Downs and Whitsundays, please provide your email address:

Email address:

Please record any other comments regarding the impact of higher electricity bills.

Your individual comments are confidential and will only be used to develop aggregate estimates of regional impacts.

Our contact number is (07) 4031 2970.

Thank you very much for your time, your participation will help to estimate the impact of rising electricity costs on your regional community.

Please return post to:

**Compass Research
PO Box 2148
Cairns, QLD, 4870**