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# **AusNet Electricity Services Pty Ltd**

## **Electricity Distribution Price Review 2022-26**

### **Appendix 3J: Who Should Pay Survey**

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**PUBLIC**





# **Customer Attitudes Research**

## **Solar connections – Who should pay for network upgrades and Demand management through air-conditioning control**

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**AusNet Services Customer Forum**

**October 2019**



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## Key findings



## Key findings

### Issue 1:

**Who should pay for distribution network upgrades to cater for the rapid growth in rooftop solar connections to the grid, and reduce or eliminate the need to constrain some customers from installing rooftop solar panels or the amount of energy they can feed into the grid.**

**Hence, the Customer Forum needs to know:**

- **“Is it reasonable for all customers, regardless of whether they have rooftop solar panels, to contribute to the cost of upgrading the network, to accommodate the growth in rooftop solar connections?”**

### **Conclusions**

- Based on these survey results, it appears the demand for rooftop solar panels is growing steadily, despite some issues and limited opportunity for customers to make money through the feed-in tariff
  - Potentially in five years 45% of all customers could have rooftop solar panels - this proportion is based the 18% of customers who indicated they have rooftop solar panels and 27% who indicated they would be likely to have rooftop solar panels within five years
- Customers are mainly motivated to have rooftop solar to save money on their electricity bills, and for some businesses, to improve the reliability of their electricity supply
- Regardless of whether they have rooftop solar panels, most customers believe all customers should pay to upgrade the network to support more solar exports
- Customer preferences are divided – with 27% preferring restrictions, 32% preferring to pay for network upgrades and 41% undecided, with limited variability between customer groups
- When further questioned, overall, and regardless of customer group or whether they currently have rooftop solar panels, most customers (74%) indicated they were willing to pay an additional \$1 per annum (residential customers)/\$7 per annum (business customers) to support more solar exports
  - Notably most customers without rooftop solar panels (72%) were willing to pay an additional \$1 per annum (residential customers)/\$7 per annum (business customers) to support more solar exports and 62% of customers who do not have rooftop solar panels believe the burden should be shared



## Key findings

### Issue 2:

**Customer support for AusNet Services to manage demand for electricity on the hottest days, when the demand on the network is at its highest, using Demand Response Enabled Device (DRED) technology so AusNet Services can remotely control their air conditioning on exceptionally hot days if the network is operating close to capacity**

### Key findings

- There is limited customer interest for AusNet Services to install a device (at the customer's expense) on their air conditioner to assist with management of peak events - overall, just over a quarter (23%) of customers with air-conditioning were interested in a device
- Among all customers with an air-conditioner (n=251), the largest proportion (37%) were not interested in having a device at all - nothing would entice them; and 10% did not know – the results only varied marginally between customer groups
- Most notably, small proportions of customers would be interested if:
  - The cost was less (11%)
  - The device was free (10%)
  - No outages were guaranteed (8%)
  - They had more information (8%)
- A financial incentive, in the form of lower bills encourages customer interest in network control of their air conditioning, to the extent that overall 48% of customers become interested in the device
  - The device is relatively more attractive to businesses (62%) than residential customers (47%)



## Key findings

### Issue 3:

**Gather broader feedback on customer satisfaction with AusNet Services than is otherwise available through AusNet Services C-Sat (customer satisfaction) program**

#### Key findings

- Consistent with various AusNet Services customer surveys reviewed by the Customer Forum, most customers (66% overall) believe their electricity bill has increased over the last two years
  - 26% believe it has increased a little
  - 40% believe it has increased a lot – further, 44% of customers who do not have rooftop solar panels believe their bill has increased a lot compared to 22% of customers with rooftop solar panels
- The average customer satisfaction rating (excluding “don’t know” responses) was 7.2/10
- Overall, 89% of customers were “satisfied” (i.e. their rating was in the range 5 to 10 out of 10)
  - However, overall 6% of customers were dissatisfied (and 15% of business customers were dissatisfied)
- The Customer Forum notes AusNet Services enthusiastic reporting of averages in its Monthly C-Sat Updates, however it is concerned that:
  - An average in isolation conveys limited information about customers’ satisfaction, and says nothing about the spread of satisfaction results, and in particular it conceals the fact that a considerable proportion of customers are dissatisfied with the service and this should be acknowledged and monitored



## Section 1: Research overview



## Survey background

This survey was developed at the request of the AusNet Services Customer Forum to establish customer attitudes in relation to three matters to assist in its final negotiations with AusNet Services on its regulatory proposal for its distribution business for the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2026

- 1. Who should pay for distribution network upgrades to cater for the rapid growth in solar connections to the grid, and reduce or the need to constrain some customers from installing rooftop solar panels or the amount of energy they can feed into the grid, hence, the Customer Forum needs to know**
  - **“Is it reasonable for all customers to contribute to the cost of upgrading the network, to accommodate the growth in rooftop solar connections?”**
- 2. Customer support or otherwise for AusNet Services to manage demand for electricity on the hottest days when the demand on the network is at its highest, using Demand Response Enabled Device (DRED) technology that allows them to be remotely controlled on exceptionally hot days if the electrical grid is close to capacity**
- 3. Gather broader feedback on customer satisfaction with AusNet Services than is otherwise available through AusNet Services C-Sat (customer satisfaction) program**

The Customer Forum guided the survey objectives and design to ensure it would provide reliable and statistically valid information about customer preferences, taking into account location (metropolitan/rural and regional location), and customer type (residents and businesses)

- Field Works was commissioned to collect the data for this survey
  - Residential customer details were sourced from Sample Pages ([samplepages.com.au](http://samplepages.com.au)), while business customer contacts were sourced from the Data Services IncNet database ([www.data.com.au](http://www.data.com.au))
  - Interviewing commenced on Wednesday 31 July 2019 and concluded on Friday 6 September 2019; the long duration eliminated the need for a second interviewing team and ensured interviewers were given the same briefing
  - 300 interviews were completed: 200 Melbourne/100 regional Victoria and 200 residential and 100 business interviews
- Helen Bartley in her capacity as a member of the AusNet Services Customer Forum briefed the interviewers, analysed the survey data and prepared this report



## Achieved sample

Location	Residents (n=200)	Businesses <sup>1</sup> (n=100)	Total (n=300)
Metro Melbourne	100	50	150
Regional and rural Victoria	100	50	150
Owners	89%	61%	79%
Tenants	12%	39%	21%
Have rooftop solar panels	45%	41%	43%
Do not have rooftop solar panels	55%	59%	57%
Eligible to receive concessions on energy bills	40%		
Not eligible to receive concessions on energy bills	60%		
House	97%		
Apartment	3%		

1. Surveyed businesses included: 26% manufacturers, 18% retailers/shopfront/wholesale businesses, 11% accommodation providers, 10% office based admin and professional service businesses, 8% trade businesses, 6% agriculture, 5% education/childcare, 5% hospitality, 4% healthcare; 7% others



## Data note

- The achieved sample (as shown on page 9) over-represents customers with rooftop solar panels; given the sample estimate is 43% compared to the AusNet population figure 18% of customers
- This sample bias raised concerns for the Customer Forum and consequently a full review of the survey method and data was undertaken. The review also involving Field Works established
  - There were no errors in the data
    - Interviewers had been monitored and a sample of interviews had been validated in accordance with market and social industry practice and standards
    - At the time of the interview, survey interviewers had confirmed with customers they were referring to rooftop solar panels, not a solar hot water system
    - Customers' verbatim responses to other related questions (e.g. motivations for having rooftop solar panels and awareness of their feed-in tariff) supported their answer that they had rooftop solar panels
  - However, the survey introduction, "We're gathering feedback from AusNet Services customers in your area, to help them better understand customers' needs and expectations *around solar power*", potentially influenced the survey response. With hindsight this may have deterred non-solar customers from participating in the survey.
- To correct for this potential bias and account for the disproportionately stratified sample design with respect to customer location (metro versus regional/rural customers) and customer group (residential versus non-residential customers) the data was subsequently weighted using AusNet Services population figures (correct as at 25 September 2019) to reflect the correct proportions of customers by location, type and whether or not they had rooftop solar panels
- The sample sizes reported throughout are unweighted, reflecting the numbers of customers in each reported group who responded to the question; while all survey results hereon are weighted



## Section 2: Surveyed customer profile



## Energy appliances

Customers were asked “Which of the following do you have at your home/business?”<sup>2</sup>

- **Air conditioning** is no longer a luxury, given 79% of residential customers and 84% of business customers have air conditioning installed
- **The prevalence of roof-top solar panels is a weighting variable, so as reported it merely reflects the population distribution as advised by AusNet Services**

Appliance	Total sample (n=300)	Residents (n=200)	Businesses (n=100)	Metro (n=150)	Rural/regional (n=150)	Metro residents (n=100)	Rural/regional residents (n=100)	Metro businesses (n=50)	Rural/regional businesses (n=50)	Concession card holders (n=80)	No concession card (n=119)
<b>Any type of air conditioning</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Air conditioning (for cooling and heating)	58%	56%	75%	56%	61%	54%	59%	74%	75%	52%	59%
Air conditioning (for cooling only)	28%	28%	22%	31%	23%	31%	24%	29%	17%	26%	30%
<b>Rooftop solar panels</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Solar hot water	14%	15%	6%	13%	17%	13%	18%	6%	6%	17%	15%
Battery storage system	2%	2%	1%	0%	3%	0%	4%	1%	1%	2%	2%
An electric vehicle that is not a hybrid	2%	2%	2%	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%	4%	2%	2%
None of the above / unsure	15%	15%	14%	16%	14%	16%	15%	16%	12%	23%	10%

2. Interviewers were briefed to confirm that customers were not including solar hot water systems when asked if they had roof-top solar panels.



## Section 3: Solar connections

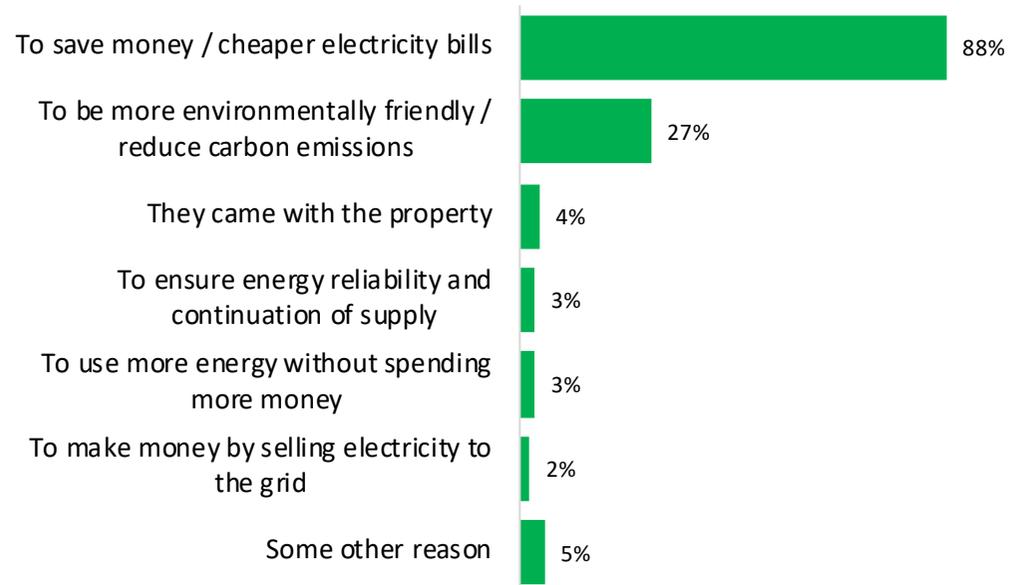


## Customers' key motivations to have rooftop solar panels

Customers with rooftop solar panels were asked: *"What are the reasons for having solar?"*

- Customers are primarily motivated to have rooftop solar panels to simply save money by reducing their electricity bills
  - This motivation differs to making money (to save money), apparent from the large proportion of solar customers who receive 12 cents or less per kilowatt hour for their exported electricity
- To a lesser extent, customers are motivated to have rooftop solar panels to be more environmentally friendly

**Total sample (n=130)**



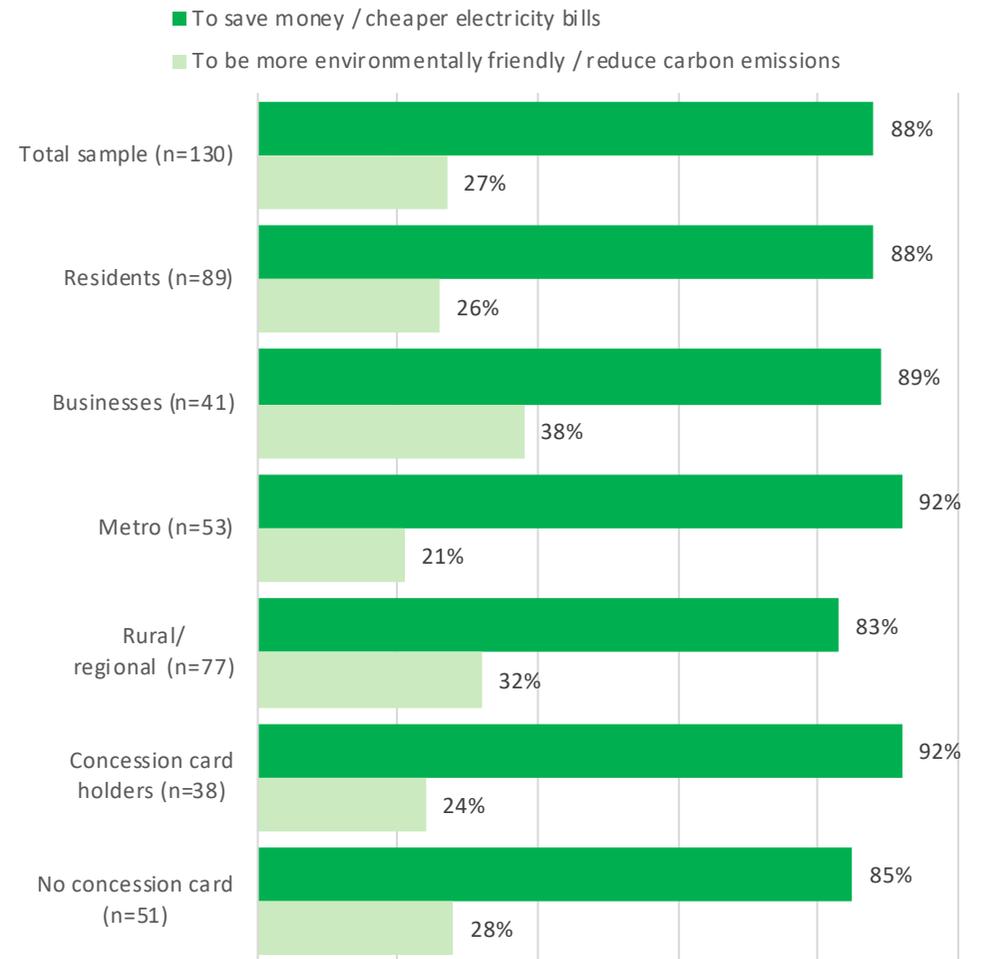
If customers continue to believe rooftop solar panels are likely to save them money on their electricity bills then ongoing growth in solar connections regardless of other factors is likely



## Top motivations to have rooftop solar panels by customer group

- Saving money is a key motivation to have rooftop solar panels
  - This applied to residents and businesses with rooftop solar panels; and metro and rural/regional customers
  - Concession card holders were more likely to be motivated to have rooftop solar panels to save money than other residential customers (92% compared to 85%)
- Business customers were most likely to be motivated to have rooftop solar panels to be more environmentally friendly (38%)

**Top two rooftop solar motivations by customer group**

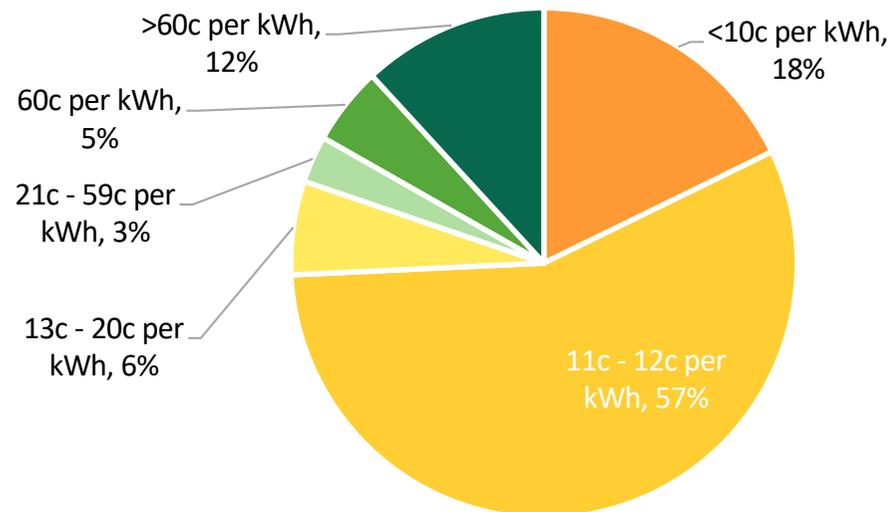




## Solar customers' awareness of export of excess solar

Customers with rooftop solar panels were asked: *"Are you aware that if you produce more solar power than you use it is exported to the electricity grid?"*

- Nearly all customers **with** rooftop solar panels (97%, n=126) are aware that if they produce more rooftop solar power than they use it is exported to the electricity grid
- These 126 customers, were asked *"Are you aware that you are/your business is paid for the power you export?"*
  - Nearly all (95%, n=117) are aware they are/their business is paid for the power they export
- These 117 customers, were asked: *"Do you know what you are paid per kilowatt hour, that is your feed-in tariff?"*
  - 67% (n=77) believe they know what they are paid per kilowatt hour
  - Awareness is slightly higher among rural/regional customers (71%) compared to metro customers (64%), but is lower among concession card holders (59%) than residential customers without a concession card (72%)
  - Most of the 77 customers believe they are on a feed-in tariff up to only 12 cents per kilowatt hour



Given most customers are on a low feed-in tariff, exporting to the grid is probably not a major contributor to customers' saving money by having rooftop solar



## Issues with rooftop solar panels

Customers with rooftop solar panels were asked: *“Do you have any issues with your solar power?”*

- 27% of customers indicated that have issues with the rooftop solar panels (n=35)
  - Metro customers were more likely to have issues compared to rural/regional customers
    - 37% of metro residents reported issues compared to 17% of rural/regional residents
- The key issues mentioned by the 35 customers were:
  - The feed-in tariff is too low (30%)
    - Mentioned by 6 of the 14 metro residents who reported issues
  - Can't see a bill reduction (22%)
    - Mentioned by 4 of the 9 rural/regional residents who reported issues
    - Mentioned by 3 of the 9 rural/regional residents who reported issue
  - Unsure if the panels are working (14%)
  - AusNet Services has restricted the amount of power that can be exported (10%)
  - Need more panels (10%)
  - Problems with the installer (6%)
  - Being charged more than earning from having rooftop solar panels (6%)

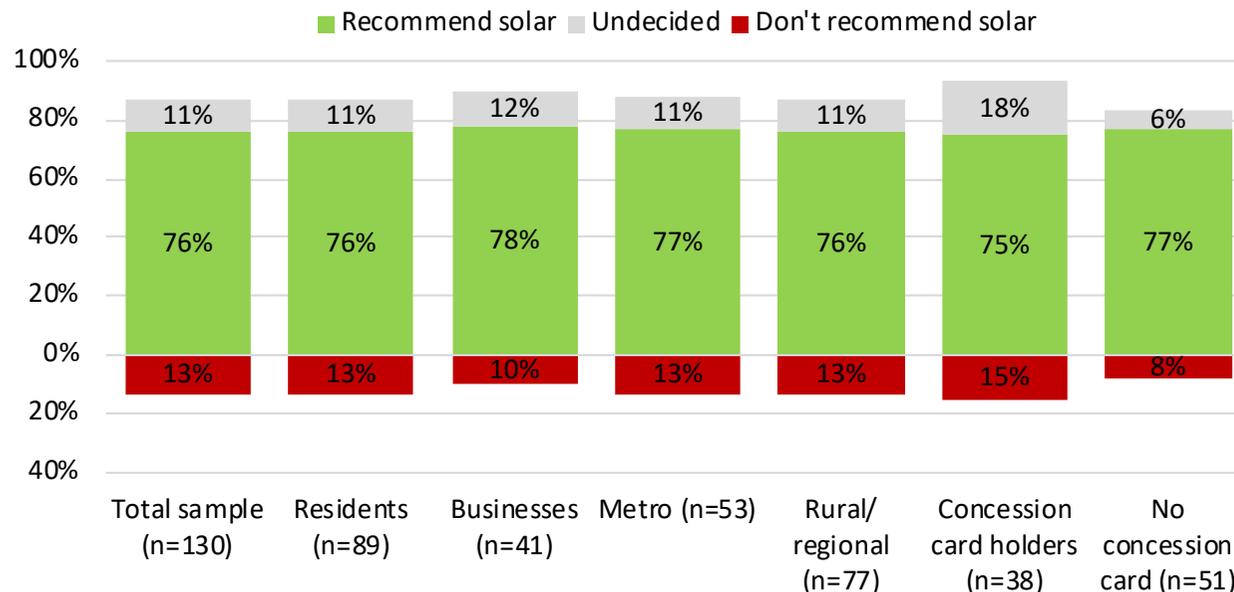


## Solar recommendation

Customers with rooftop solar panels were asked: *“Overall, would you recommend rooftop solar panels to other residents or businesses?”*

- Most customers with rooftop solar panels would recommend rooftop solar panels to other residents/businesses (76%) – and most of these customers were motivated to have rooftop solar panels to save money (94%)
  - This motivation applies even though most of those customers were only on a low feed in tariff of 13 cents per kWh or less (52%) or they did not know their excess power was fed into the network or their feed in tariff (38%)
- Among the 11% (n=16) of customers who would not recommend rooftop solar panels; 13 reported issues with their rooftop solar panels
  - Four were concerned their panels were not working
  - Three were concerned the rebate was too small
  - Three could not see any reduction in their bill

This recommendation would only encourage more customers to take up solar – regardless of any issues!



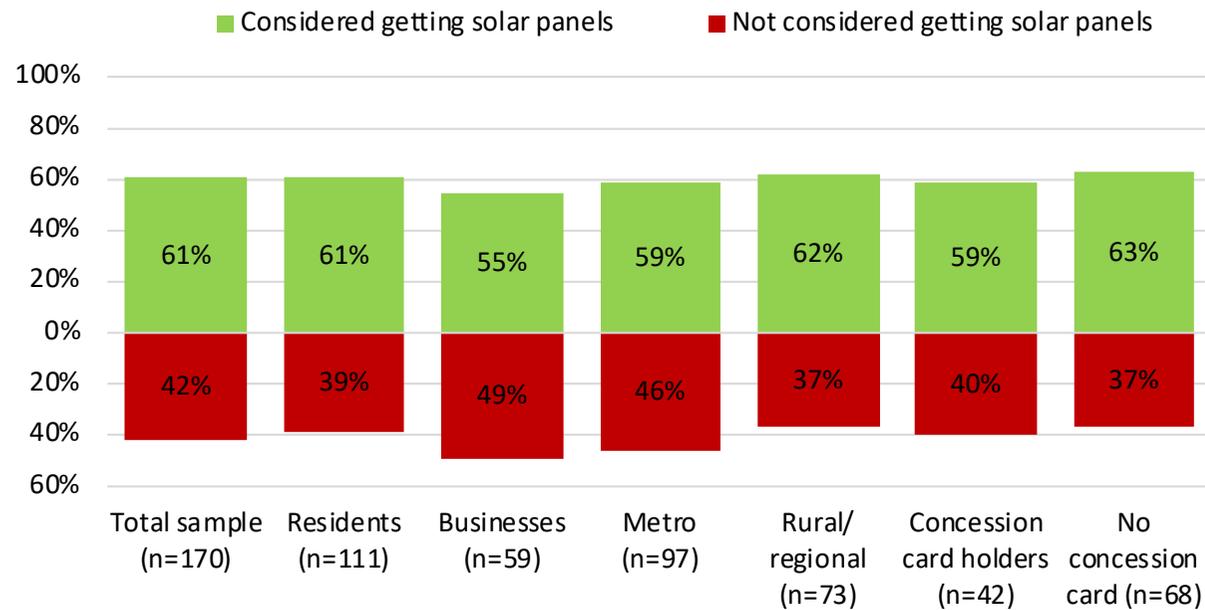


## Interest in rooftop solar panels among customers without rooftop solar panels

Customers who do not have rooftop solar panels were asked: *"Have you considered getting solar panels for your home/business?"*

- Overall 61% of the 170 customers who do not have rooftop solar panels indicated they had considered getting rooftop solar panels for their home or business
  - The results vary little between customer groups

This finding supports a growing appetite for rooftop solar

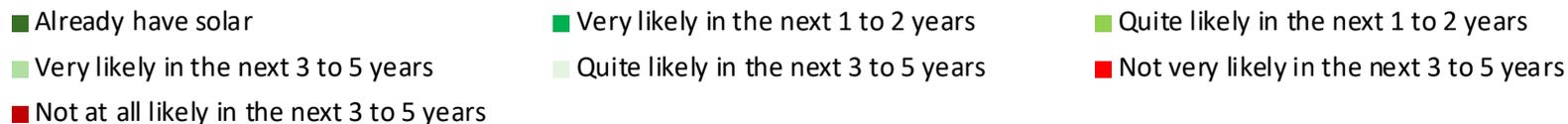




## Anticipated prevalence of rooftop solar panels

The 170 customers who do not have rooftop solar panels were asked: *“How likely is it you will get solar panels in the next 1 to 2 years?”* and if unlikely they were asked: *“How likely is it you will get solar panels in the next 3 to 5 years?”*

- In addition to those customers who have rooftop solar panels, overall, an additional 16% of customers indicated they would be likely to get rooftop solar panels for their home/business within the next one to two years and an additional 12% would be likely within the next three to five years
- Potentially in five years 45% of all customers could have rooftop solar panels



This finding supports a steady growth in solar in AusNet Services area over the next five years



## Benefits and barriers to installing rooftop solar panels

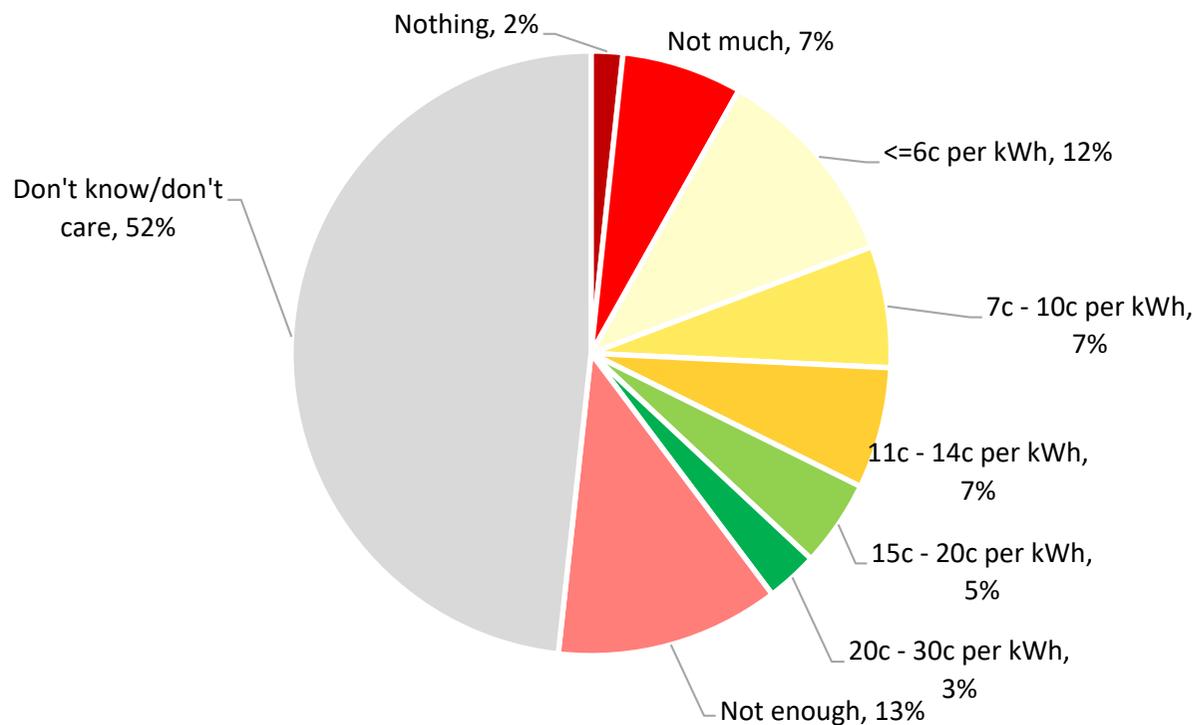
- The 55 customers who indicated they would be likely to get rooftop solar panels within the next one to two, or three to five years were asked to indicate the **benefits of installing rooftop solar panels**. Overall,
  - 92% believed they would save money/have cheaper electricity bills if they had rooftop solar panels
  - 33% identified the environmental benefits of rooftop solar panels (reducing carbon emissions)
  - 11% believed rooftop solar panels would help ensure they had a reliable and continued energy supply
- The 170 customers who do not currently have rooftop solar panels were asked to indicate the **barriers to installing rooftop solar panels**.
  - Among the 55 customers who do not currently have rooftop solar panels but are likely to install them within 3 to 5 years:
    - 34% indicated affordability was an issue
    - 28% indicated they were not worth the investment
    - 5% indicated they had no barriers
  - Among the 114 customers who are unlikely to install rooftop solar panels in the next three to five years:
    - 32% indicated they were not worth the investment
    - 28% indicated affordability was an issue
    - 16% indicated they don't own the property/they are tenants
    - 13% indicated they had no barriers
    - 9% the property is unsuitable (too many trees, flat roof, shade)



## Awareness of export of excess solar among non-solar customers

The 170 customers who do not have rooftop solar panels were asked: *“Are you aware that you would be paid for the power you export?”* and *“How much do you think you would be paid?”*

- Nearly all customers **without** rooftop solar panels (90%, n=156) are aware that if they produce more solar power than they use it is exported to the electricity grid and they are/their business is paid for the power they export
- Among these 156 customers, 48% believe they know what they are paid per kilowatt hour
  - Most of these non-solar customers believe they are on low feed-in tariff



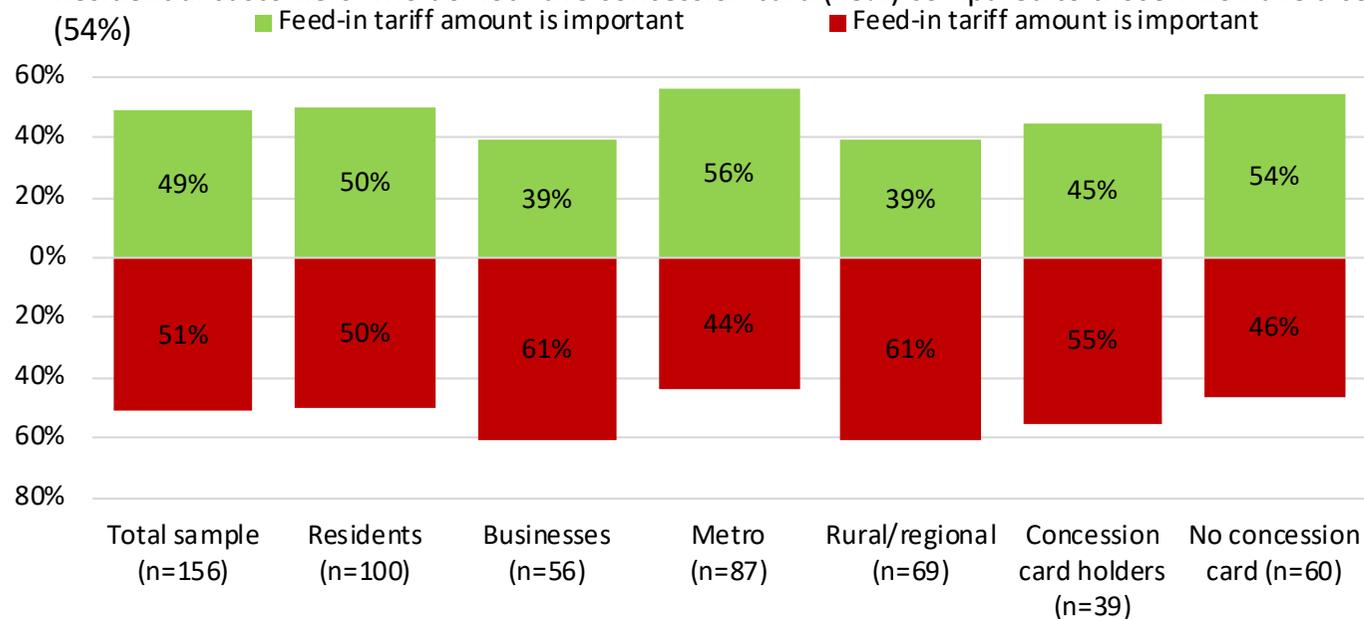
Regardless of their belief about the feed-in tariff, an additional 28% of customers are likely to have rooftop solar panels in the next one to two or three to five years



## Importance of feed-in tariff to customers without rooftop solar panels

The 156 customers who do not have rooftop solar panels and are aware they would be paid for the power they export, were asked: *“Does it matter how much you would be paid?”*

- Among these 156 customers, 49% of customers indicated the amount they would be paid was important, and it was relatively more likely to be important to:
  - Residential customers (50%) than business customers (39%)
  - Metro customers (56%) compared to rural/regional customers (39%)
  - Residential customers who do not have concession card (45%) compared to those who have a concession card (54%)



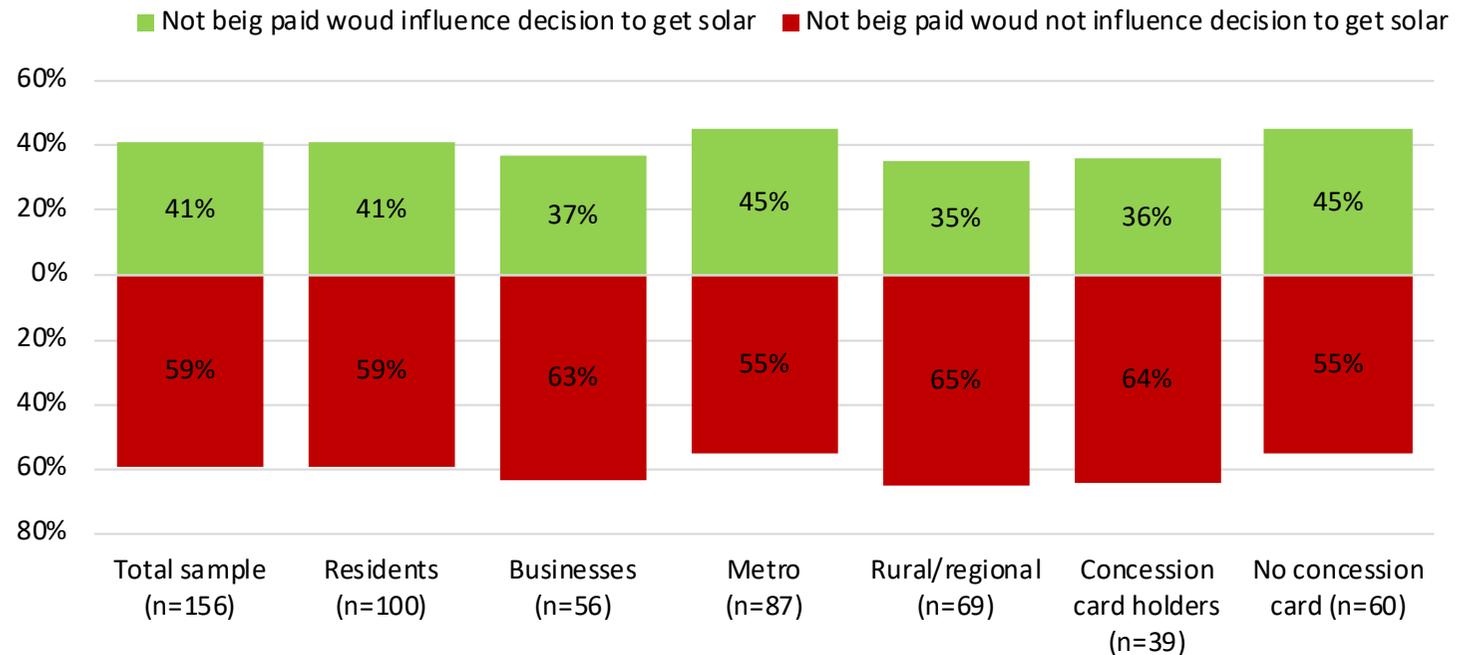


## Impact of not being paid to export solar among customers without rooftop solar panels

The 156 customers who do not have rooftop solar panels and are aware they would be paid for the power they export, were asked: *“If you weren’t paid would that influence your decision about installing solar panels?”*

- Among these 156 customers, 41% indicated not being paid would influence their decision to get rooftop solar panels, and was more likely to influence:
  - Metro customers (45%) than regional/rural customers (35%)
  - Residential customers who do not have concession card (45%) compared to those who have a concession card (36%)
  - Customers who indicated it matters how much they would be paid (65%) compared to those who indicated it does not matter how much they would be paid (17%)

These results suggest having rooftop solar panels is not generally about making money





## **Section 4: Customer attitude to constraining solar exports**

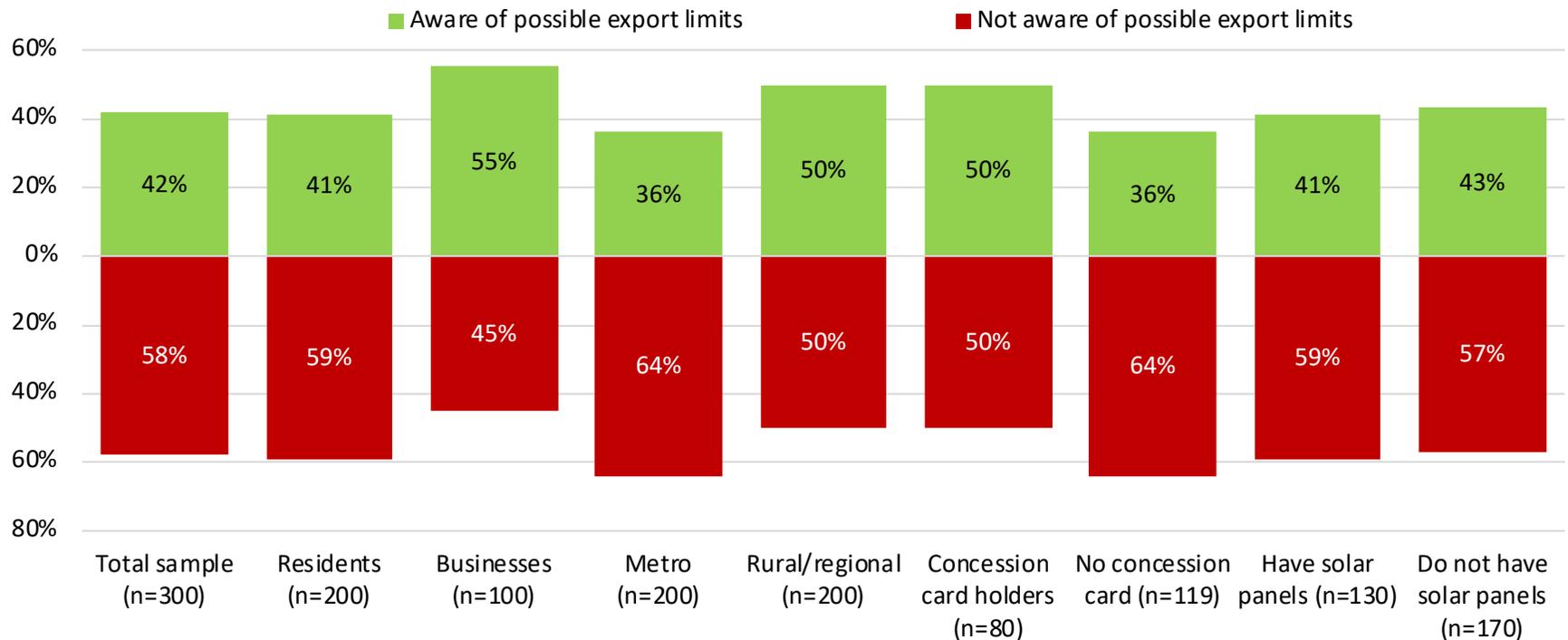


## Customer awareness of impacts of solar exports on the network

All customers, regardless of whether they had rooftop solar panels were asked:

*“As more houses and businesses install solar and start exporting electricity, the electricity network can overload, impacting appliances and reliability and safety of the network. As a result, the network might stop, or limit the amount of electricity households and businesses can export back into the network. Were you aware of this before now?”*

- 42% of customers are aware a network distributor can limit customers’ solar exports, with little variance between customer groups, including whether or not customers have rooftop solar panels



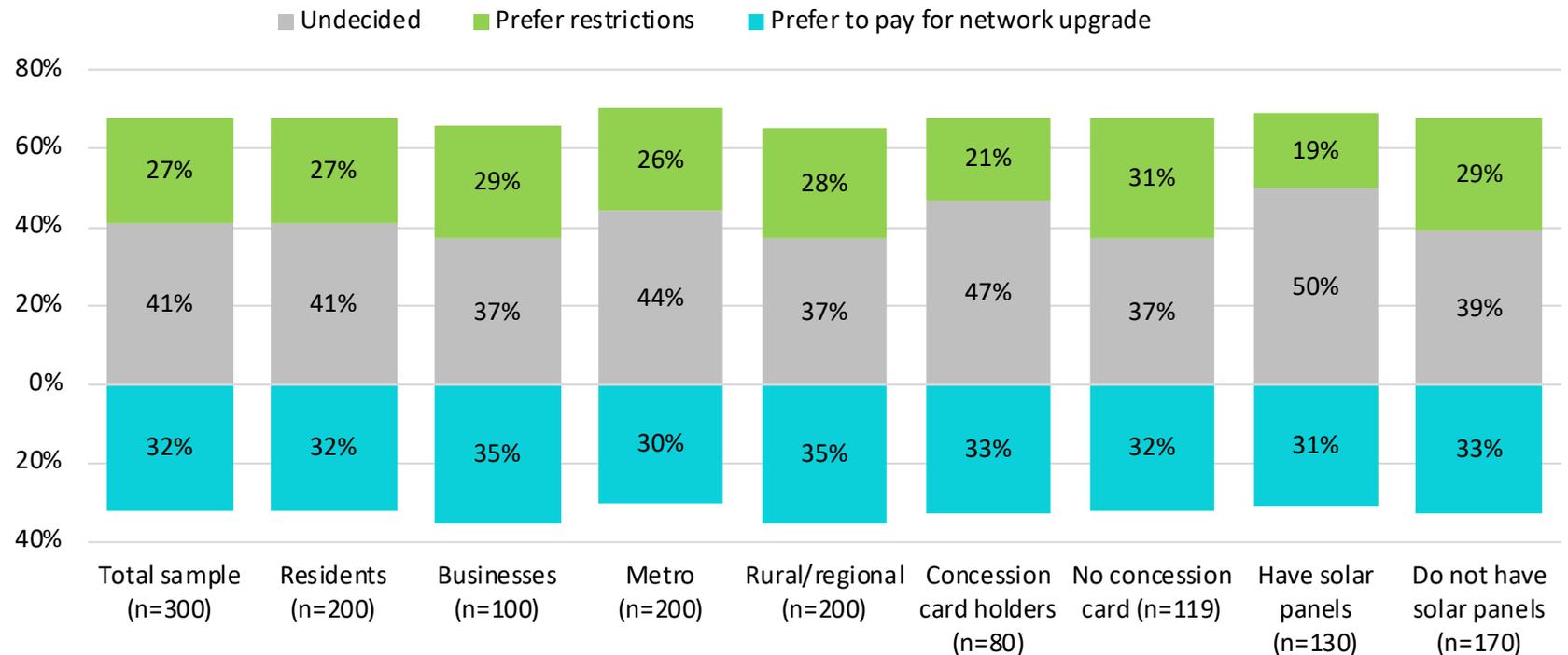


## Preference for restricting solar exports or network upgrade

All customers, regardless of whether they had rooftop solar panels were then asked:

*“Allowing more customers to export solar power would require network upgrades and higher charges for all customers. Would you prefer restrictions on the amount of power that can be exported to avoid any bill increase or would you rather pay for the network infrastructure to be upgraded to accommodate more solar exports?”*

- Customer preferences are divided – with 27% preferring restrictions, 32% preferring to pay for network upgrades and 41% undecided, with limited variability between customer groups, apart from customers with rooftop solar panels who are relatively less likely to want restrictions (only 19%)





## Willingness to pay to increase solar export

Residential customers, regardless of whether they had rooftop solar panels were advised as follows:

*“AusNet Services is proposing to use technology and some network upgrades to allow more solar power to be exported to the network and reduce the number of times a solar customer’s exports might be limited. This would add \$1 per annum, to your electricity bill”*

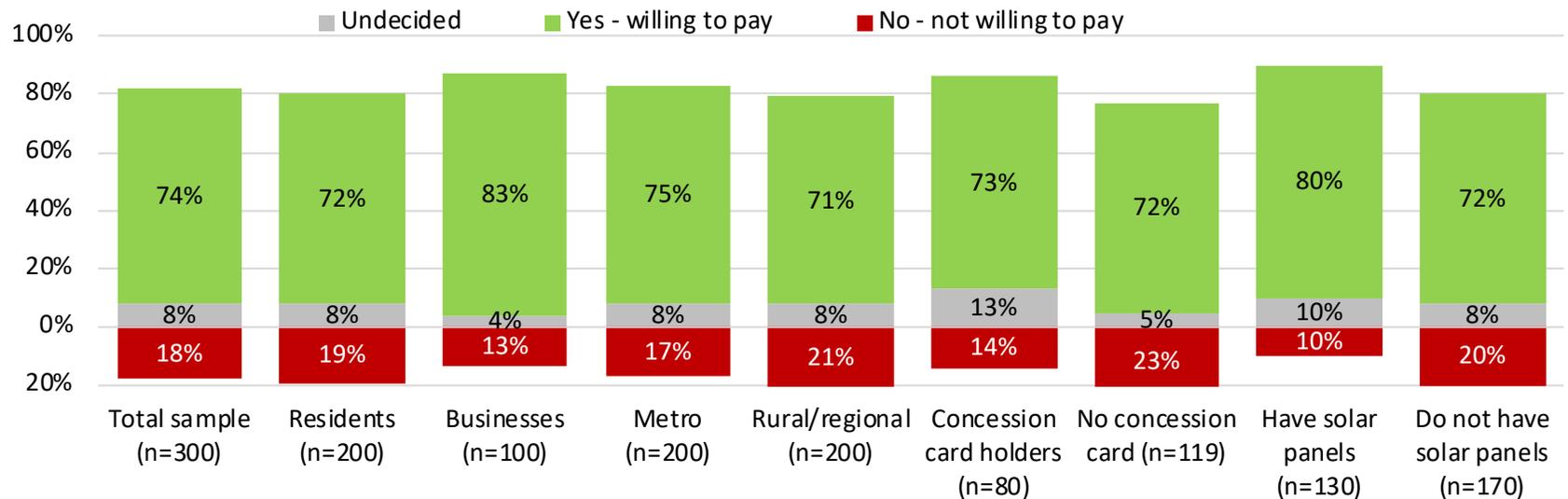
Business customers, regardless of whether they had rooftop solar panels were advised as follows :

*“AusNet Services is proposing to use technology and some network upgrades to allow more solar power to be exported to the network and reduce the number of times a solar customer’s exports might be limited. This would add \$7 per annum, to your electricity bill.”*

Interviewers were briefed to read these statements slowly and clearly, and to confirm the customer understood what they were being told before they were asked:

*“Would you be willing to pay this amount to support more solar exports?”*

- Overall, and regardless of customer group, 74% of customers indicated they were willing to pay an additional \$1 per annum (residential customers)/\$7 per annum (business customers) to support more solar exports

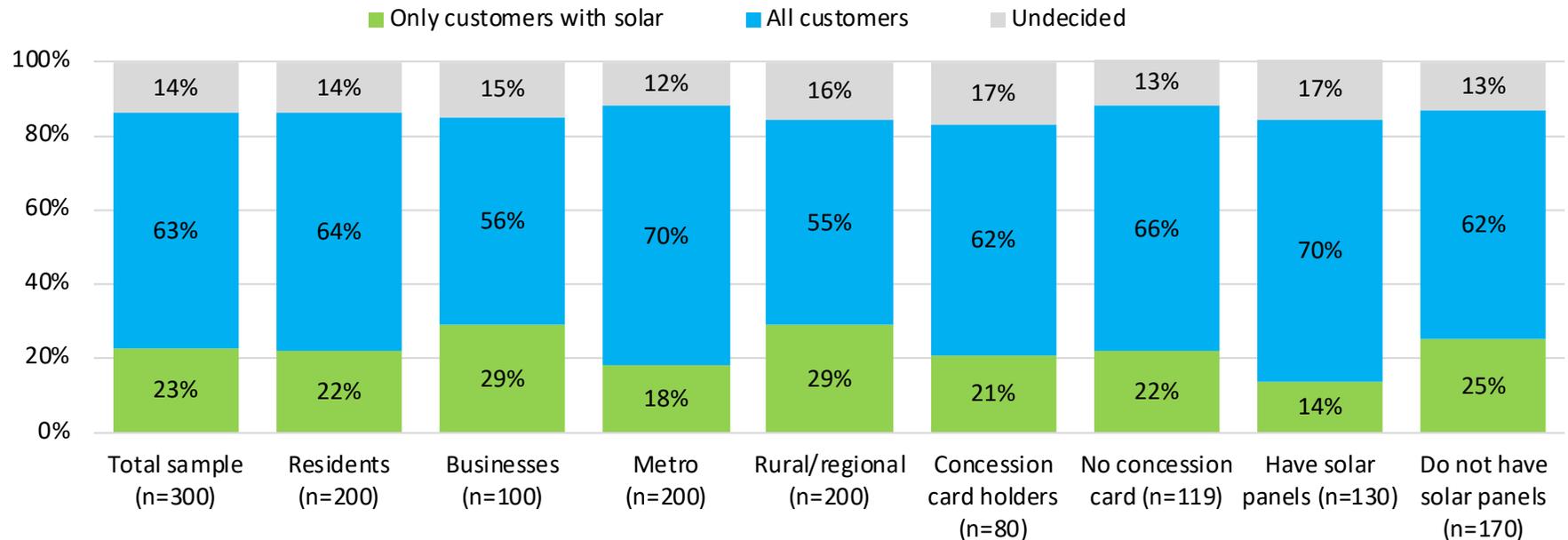




## Who should pay for network upgrade

All customers were asked: *“Do you think only customers with solar or all customers should pay to upgrade the network?”*

- Almost two thirds of customers (63%, n=191) believe all customers should pay to upgrade the network to support more solar exports, with little variability between customer groups. These customers believe:
  - All customers will benefit from a network upgrade (27%)
  - Everyone uses electricity from the network (17%)
  - It encourages more people to get solar (9%)
  - The burden is shared (8%)
- In contrast, 23% (n=64) believe only customers with rooftop solar panels should pay, because:
  - Those who don’t have rooftop solar do not get any benefit from a network upgrade (21%)
  - Its fair that those who get the benefit pay for the upgrade (20%)
- Notably, 25% of customers who do not have rooftop solar panels believe only customers with solar panels should pay, while 62% believe the burden should be shared





## Section 5: Demand management



## Interest in air-conditioning control device to manage demand

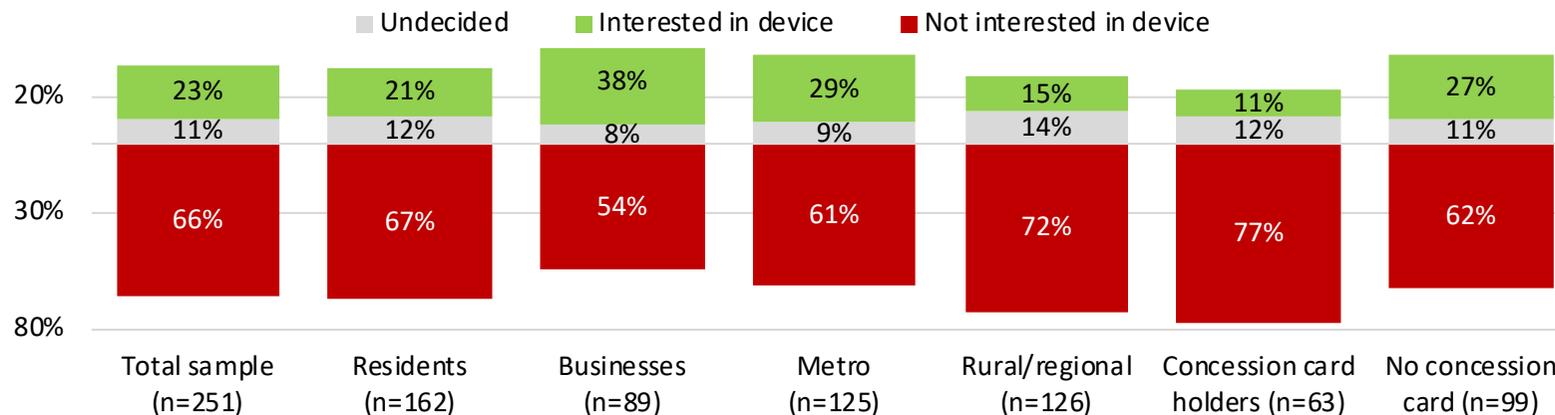
All customers with air conditioning (cooling only and/or heating and cooling) were advised as follows:

*“As you might be aware, more homes and businesses use air conditioners. When it is particularly hot, the electricity network can become stressed and shut down. Air conditioners can have a device fitted to remotely control their energy efficiency. During peak events, and when the network is stressed, the device gets a ‘message’ to automatically operate the air conditioner in an economy setting reducing, pressure on the network. In Victoria, this kind of peak event historically has only happened once or twice a year.”*

Interviewers were briefed to read the statement slowly and clearly, and to confirm the customer understood what they were being told before they were asked:

*“The device costs around \$150 to buy and install, would you consider having such a device on your existing air conditioner to help manage peak events in Victoria?”*

- Overall, just over a quarter (23%) of customers with air-conditioning were interested in a device being installed on their air conditioner to assist with management of peak events
  - Business customers (38%) were more likely to be interested than residential customers (21%)
  - Metro customers (29%) were more likely to be interested than rural/regional customers (15%)
  - Residential customers without a concession card (27%) were more likely to be interested than concession card holders (11%)





## Customers' concerns about network control over their air conditioning

Customers with an air conditioner, who were not interested in a device were asked: *"What are your concerns?"*

- In total 183 customers (n=158) were concerned about having a device to control their air conditioning, or were undecided in their opinions (n=25). Among this group their key concerns were:
  - Overall, 23% indicated they don't use the air conditioner enough to warrant the expense
    - 3% of business customers compared to 25% of residential customers indicated they don't use their air conditioner enough to warrant the expense
  - Overall 15% were directly concerned about the cost
  - 12% already run their air conditioner on the economy cycle
  - 11% believe customers should not pay (AusNet Services or the government should pay)

Concerns	Total sample (n=183)	Residents (n=129)	Businesses (n=54)	Metro (n=82)	Rural/regional (n=101)	Concession card holders (n=55)	No concession card (n=74)
None	5%	4%	9%	0%	10%	3%	5%
Don't use the air conditioner much	23%	25%	3%	24%	22%	27%	23%
The cost	15%	15%	17%	18%	12%	14%	15%
Already run air conditioner on economy cycle	12%	12%	10%	10%	14%	14%	11%
Should be the distributor's responsibility/paying already/they should maintain the network	11%	10%	21%	12%	10%	6%	14%
Don't need it/prefer to self manage	8%	8%	13%	10%	6%	14%	3%
Not practical - cooling is essential	6%	5%	9%	4%	8%	6%	5%
Happy to follow government advice	5%	5%	0%	7%	3%	9%	2%
Don't know enough about it/need more information	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Don't like being controlled	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	5%
Using solar - so no need	2%	2%	5%	3%	1%	0%	3%
Other	13%	14%	9%	11%	16%	17%	12%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	3%	0%	0%	3%



## Enticements to opt-in to network control

All customers with an air conditioner were asked: *“What would help you opt in for such a device?”*

- Among all customers with an air-conditioner (n=251), the largest proportion (37%) were not interested in having a device at all - nothing would entice them; and 10% did not know – the results only varied marginally between customer groups
- Most notably, small proportions of customers would be interested if:
  - The cost was less (11%)
  - The device was free (10%)
  - No outages were guaranteed (8%)
  - They had more information (11%)

Enticements	Total sample (n=250)	Residents (n=162)	Businesses (n=89)	Metro (n=125)	Rural/regional (n=126)	Concession card holders (n=63)	No concession card (n=89)
Nothing	37%	37%	34%	36%	39%	42%	34%
If the price was less	11%	11%	9%	12%	10%	6%	14%
If it was free	10%	10%	11%	9%	11%	9%	11%
Guaranteed no outages	8%	8%	7%	10%	5%	10%	6%
More information about it	8%	8%	13%	9%	7%	6%	9%
Rebate/discount/incentive	5%	5%	8%	4%	6%	0%	8%
Lower energy bill	4%	4%	5%	3%	5%	6%	3%
If everyone had them	3%	2%	6%	3%	2%	0%	4%
If I knew it would work with my air conditioner/if I was upgrading my air conditioner and knew it would work	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	2%	1%
Other	7%	7%	3%	7%	6%	9%	6%
Don't know	10%	10%	6%	11%	8%	13%	9%



## Interest in device to save on network expenditure

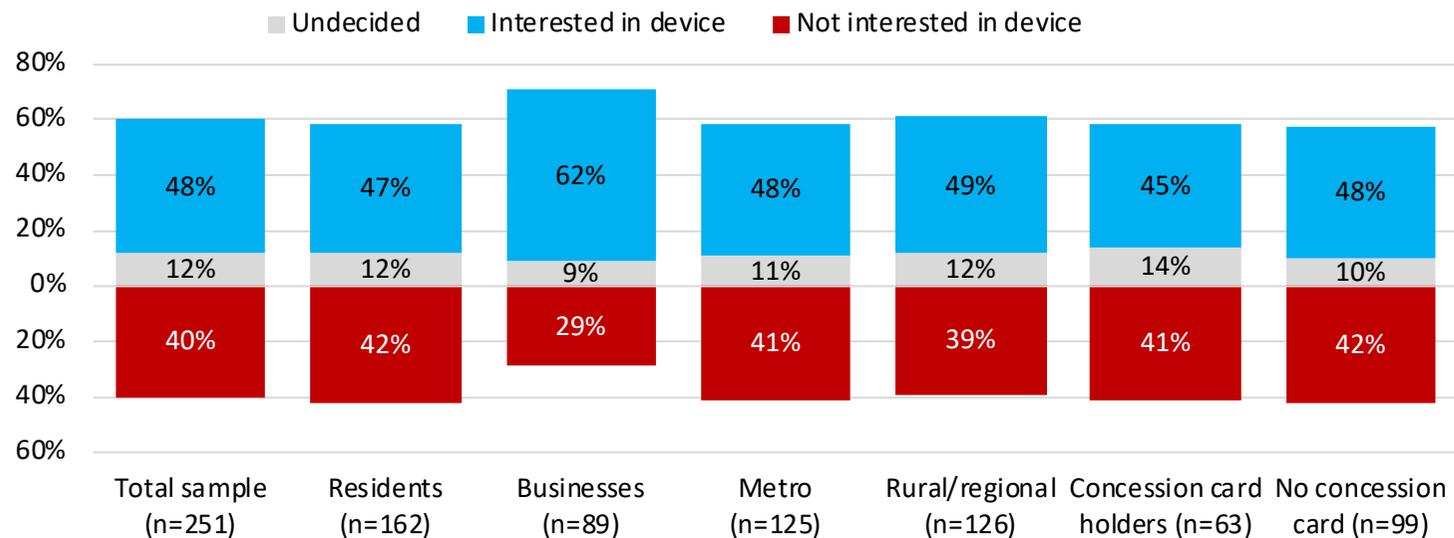
All customers with air conditioning (cooling only and/or heating and cooling) were advised as follows:

*“Increased use of air conditioners has contributed to rising energy bills. If your air conditioner had a device, this would reduce the need for energy distributors to spend more money on the network. Spending more money on the network could result in higher bills. If you were willing to have a device fitted to your air conditioner, this could help keep your energy bills down.”*

Interviewers were briefed to read these statements slowly and clearly, and to confirm the customer understood what they were being told before they were asked:

*“Would this appeal to you?”*

- A financial incentive, in the form of lower bills encourages customer interest in network control of their air conditioning, to the extent that overall 48% of customers became interested in the device
  - The device is relatively more attractive to businesses (62%) than residential customers (47%)





## **Section 6: Overall perceptions of AusNet Services**



## Bill perceptions

All customers were asked: *“Over the last two years do you feel your electricity bills have ... decreased a lot, decreased a little, stayed about the same, increased a little, increased a lot?”*

- Consistent with various AusNet Services customer surveys reviewed by the Customer Forum, most customers (66% overall) believe their electricity bill has increased over the last two years
  - Overall, 26% believe it has increased a little
  - Overall, 40% believe it has increased a lot
    - Notably 44% of customers who do not have rooftop solar panels believe their bill has increased a lot, compared to 22% of customers with rooftop solar panels

Perception of electricity bill over last two years	Total sample (n=183)	Residents (n=129)	Businesses (n=54)	Metro (n=82)	Rural/regional (n=101)	Concession card holders (n=55)	No concession card (n=74)	Have solar (n=130)	Do not have solar (n=170)
Decreased a lot	4%	4%	1%	3%	6%	4%	5%	15%	1%
Decreased a little	10%	10%	3%	12%	7%	10%	11%	23%	7%
Stayed the same	16%	16%	9%	14%	17%	20%	13%	10%	17%
Increased a little	26%	26%	33%	24%	30%	31%	23%	24%	27%
Increased a lot	40%	39%	48%	43%	35%	30%	45%	22%	44%
Unsure	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%



## Contact with AusNet Services

All customers were asked: *“Before today were you aware that AusNet Services is the sole distributor, responsible for operating and maintaining the electricity network, being the poles and wires in your area?”*

- Most customers (79%) are aware of AusNet Services

All customers were asked: *“In the last two years have you contacted AusNet Services?”*, and if they had contacted AusNet Services, they were also asked *“If 1 is poor and 10 is excellent, overall, how do you rate the quality of customer service you received from AusNet Services?”*

- Just under a quarter (23%) indicated they had contacted AusNet Services in the last two years
  - Overall, among the 83 customers who had contacted AusNet Services:
    - 12% rated their experience as “poor” (1 to 4/10)
    - 28% rated their experience as “satisfactory” (5 or 6/10)
    - 59% rated their experience as “good” or “excellent” (7 to 10/10)

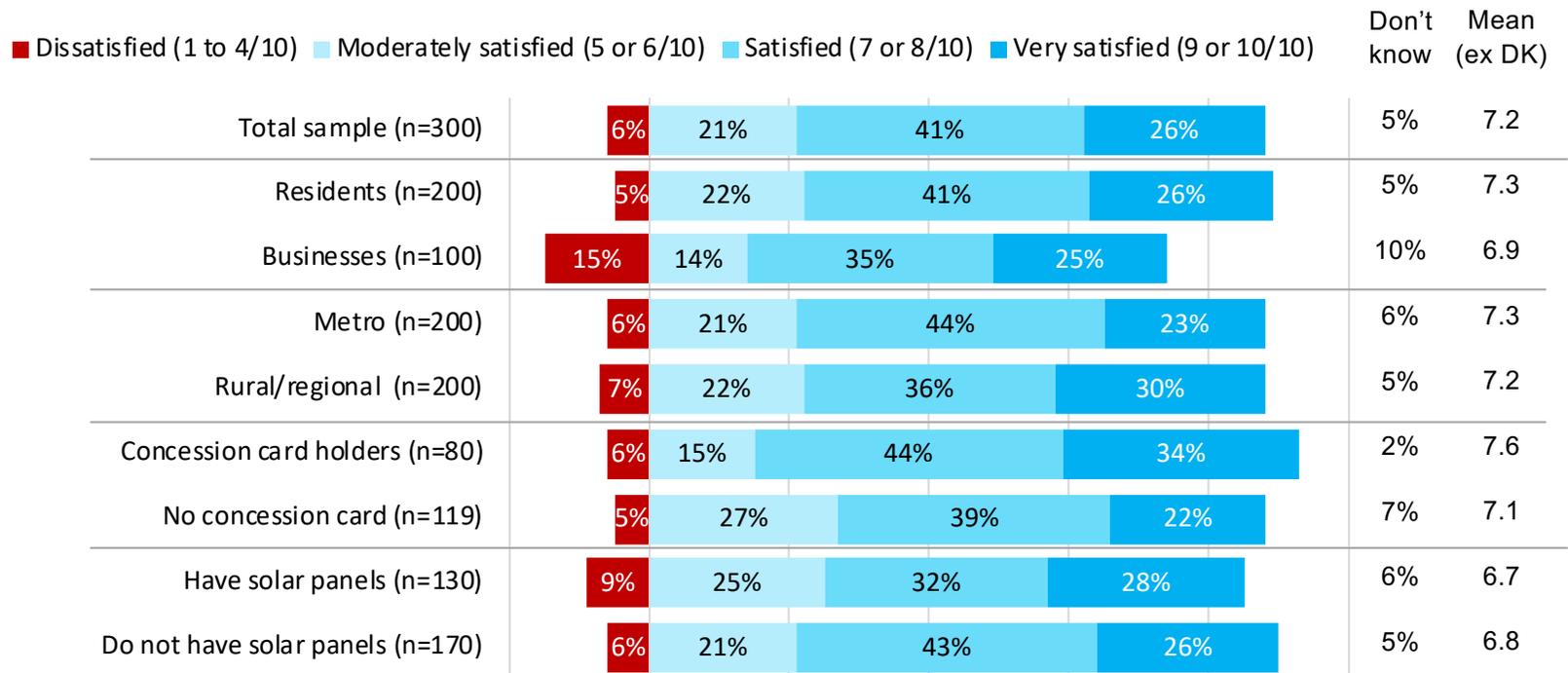
	Total sample (n=300)	Residents (n=200)	Businesses (n=100)	Metro (n=200)	Rural/ regional (n=200)	Concession card holders (n=80)	No concession card (n=119)	Have solar panels (n=130)	Do not have solar panels (n=170)
Aware AS is customers' sole electricity distributor	79%	78%	80%	75%	84%	84%	74%	83%	78%
Contact with AS in last 2 years	23%	22%	35%	22%	25%	27%	19%	25%	23%
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Total sample (n=83)	Residents (n=46)	Businesses (n=37)	Metro (n=37)	Rural/ regional (n=46)	Concession card holders (n=23)	No concession card (n=23)	Have solar panels (n=40)	Do not have solar panels (n=43)
<b>Performance</b>									
Average rating	6.8	6.9	6.2	6.7	6.8	6.2	7.5	6.8	6.7
Poor (1 to 4/10)	12%	10%	24%	9%	16%	18%	3%	18%	11%
Satisfactory (5 or 6/10)	28%	30%	15%	42%	13%	26%	34%	16%	31%
Good (7 or 8/10)	37%	35%	48%	33%	41%	31%	38%	42%	36%
Excellent (9 or 10/10)	22%	23%	13%	17%	27%	22%	25%	18%	23%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%	7%	0%



## Customer satisfaction

All customers were asked: *“If 1 corresponds to “extremely dissatisfied” and 10 corresponds to “extremely satisfied”, overall how satisfied are you with AusNet Services as the distributor of electricity in your area?”*

- The average customer satisfaction rating (excluding “don’t know” responses) was 6.4/10
- Overall, 89% of customers were “satisfied” (i.e. their rating was in the range 5 to 10 out of 10)
  - However, overall 6% of customers were dissatisfied (and 15% of business customers were dissatisfied)
- The Customer Forum notes AusNet Services enthusiastic reporting of “averages” in its Monthly C-Sat Updates, however it is concerned an *average* in isolation conveys limited information about customers’ satisfaction, and says nothing about the spread of satisfaction results, and in particular it conceals the fact that a considerable proportion of customers are dissatisfied with the service and this should be acknowledged and monitored





## Factors affecting satisfaction

- All customers who provided a valid satisfaction rating (i.e. excluding customers who responded “don’t know” were asked to indicate the most important factor affecting their satisfaction
- The key factor across all customer groups was having a reliable power supply/no outages (mentioned by 52% of customers)
  - Notably mentioned by 60% of concession card holders compared to 51% of residential customers who do not have a concession card
- Customer service was the key factor affecting the satisfaction of 9% of customers
- Price of electricity was the key factor affecting the satisfaction of 8% of customers
  - 10% of business customers compared to 6% of residential customers