straight Talk

hear every voice, know where you stand

TasNetworks consumer engagement

First round summary

31 October 2014

Contents

Prepared By

Jebediah Cole

Reviewed By

Lucy Cole-Edelstein

Date

31 October 2014

Job Number

Job Number

Document Name

Straight Talk Report

Consumer Engagement

Version

Version 2

1 Executive Summary

TasNetworks is in the process of developing its next regulatory proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) as part of its forthcoming distribution determination. In accordance with the requirements of the *National Electricity Rules* (NER), engagement with end-users needs to be undertaken.

TasNetworks elected to continue with a process of consumer engagement which sought in depth feedback on specific issues relating to how it prices its services. Two workshops with consumers were held in September/October 2014 together with a stakeholder workshop. This executive summary gives a brief outline of the key findings from the consumer engagement forums – the full analysis is detailed later in this document.

Consumers and Technology

Forum participants were asked questions about how they decide which power-saving and alternative energy technologies and products they buy. Most participants find out about such technologies and products through the internet, through people they know and from electricity suppliers. Most make the choice to upgrade when the price is right, whilst a sizeable minority make these choices based on environmental concerns. Responses indicated that the major adoptions of technology in the sector for consumers over the next five years will be solar hot water systems and home energy management systems.

Service/Price trade-off

Forum participants in the Hobart and Launceston groups reported different experiences of power outages. Hobart participants recalled fewer, longer outages, whilst Launceston participants recalled more, shorter outages. Both groups were happy with their level of service, but reported that their current level of outages was roughly the maximum they found “acceptable”. Acceptability was found to be dependent on whether an acceptable cause of the outage was supplied (in a scenario where the state is suffering a major storm, longer outage times were deemed acceptable). Whilst a majority of consumers found TasNetwork’s outage communication adequate a sizeable minority felt that the faultlines took too long to gazette the cause of outages. It is therefore likely that any failures or flaws in the customer communication process will amplify the perceived impact of outages. Most participants did not recall a difference in the outage profile between summer and winter.

TasNetworks Services

Participants were asked about which services TasNetworks provides, first by brainstorming a list of services, and then identifying which were the “top three”.

Consumers perceive that TasNetworks’ main services are the safe and reliable supply of electricity, including the repair of faults.

Participants provided feedback on the proposed tariff principles. They were generally supportive of the principles.

Vision Exercise

Participants were asked what they imagined “a better tomorrow” should be for TasNetworks. Participant responses were themed and analysed. This wordle is a visual representation of the themes with frequency represented by word size.

STPIS Question

Participants were asked whether they supported the proposed change to the STPIS. This essentially involves reducing TasNetworks reliability incentives – as these are passed on to the consumer, reducing these incentives will mean smaller year-to-year changes in the price of electricity. Overall, most participants supported reducing the STPIS incentive from 5% to 2.5%. Support for this measure was much stronger from the Launceston group than from the Hobart group.

2 Introduction

TasNetworks is in the process of developing its next regulatory proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) as part of its forthcoming distribution determination. In accordance with the requirements of the *National Electricity Rules* (NER), engagement with end-users needs to be undertaken.

TasNetworks elected to continue with the approach it adopted when undertaking its transmission revenue determination. This approach sought qualitative data by engaging in-depth, with randomly selected, broadly representative groups of energy consumers in day long workshops.

Using a third party market research firm, consumers were recruited for two workshops, one in Launceston and one in Hobart, to work with TasNetworks in providing input to some of the key issues affecting pricing. Some of the participants had been part of the original engagement undertaken for transmission, conducted earlier in 2014, as it was felt that they had already built up a level of understanding and knowledge about this complex industry which would be helpful. The remainder of the participants were new to the issues of electricity and pricing.

The objectives of the engagement were to:

- Understand the priorities of consumers in terms of electricity and in particular explore trade-offs between reliability and price, the two main elements of cost
- Explore the level of understanding about the industry, TasNetworks part in it and the underlying values of importance to consumers that TasNetworks could then use in determining forward expenditure programs and ultimately network pricing
- Gauge how effective this method of engagement is for participants and TasNetworks with a view to bringing the same people back, early in 2015, to further test and refine the regulatory proposal.

In addition, a stakeholder workshop with representatives from the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's (OTTER) Customer Consultative Committee (OCCC) was also held. Attendance included

TASCoSS (Tasmanian Council of Social Services), the Local Government Association of Tasmania, Tasmanian Small Business Council and the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance. This workshop followed the same format as the consumer workshops. The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) were engaged separately and their feedback has been grouped into the OCCC category.

Straight Talk was engaged to provide support in the design, facilitation and reporting of the engagement process.

This report provides the outcomes of the activities from each workshop.

Participants were surveyed at the commencement of each workshop and again prior to completion in an effort to understand whether the information presented during the workshop had changed their understanding and appreciation of the intricacies of the electricity industry.

Workshop activities included group activities to identify and agree on key elements such as values, TasNetworks vision and the priorities for electricity provision, together with individual activities which sought to understand the drivers and intent of consumers in terms of their electricity usage and planning for managing that usage.

This report provides an analysis of these outcomes for TasNetworks to use as they develop their next determination with the AER. Participants will also receive copies of this report.

TasNetworks appreciates and values the contributions made by its customers as part of this process.

3 Forum results summary

Analysis notes

Data was collected from three groups: a Launceston forum, a Hobart forum, and an OCCC forum. There were 22 participants at each of the Launceston and Hobart forums. The OCCC forum was composed of four participants. Where the Hobart and Launceston forums data was largely in agreement, analysis of the total data, including the OCCC forum, is presented. Where the two large forums differed, data from each of the two forums is presented in detail and discussed. As the OCCC data has little effect on the total data, a further analysis of the total data is not necessarily presented where it makes no significant difference to the picture painted by presentation of the data from the two larger forums.

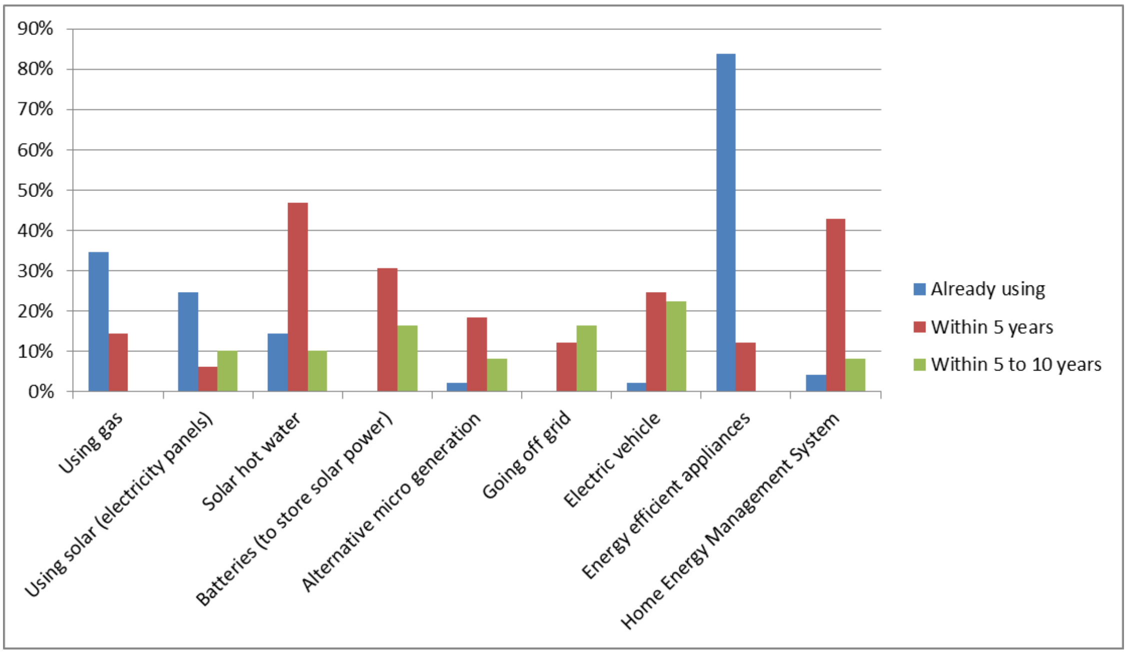
Needs analysis

Energy use options

Participants at the forums were asked about specific energy technologies and whether they had considered using them. They were asked to report on their current use and whether they had any plans to adopt these technologies. There was not a significant difference between the Launceston and Hobart groups. The combined data which also included the small OCCC group is summarised here.

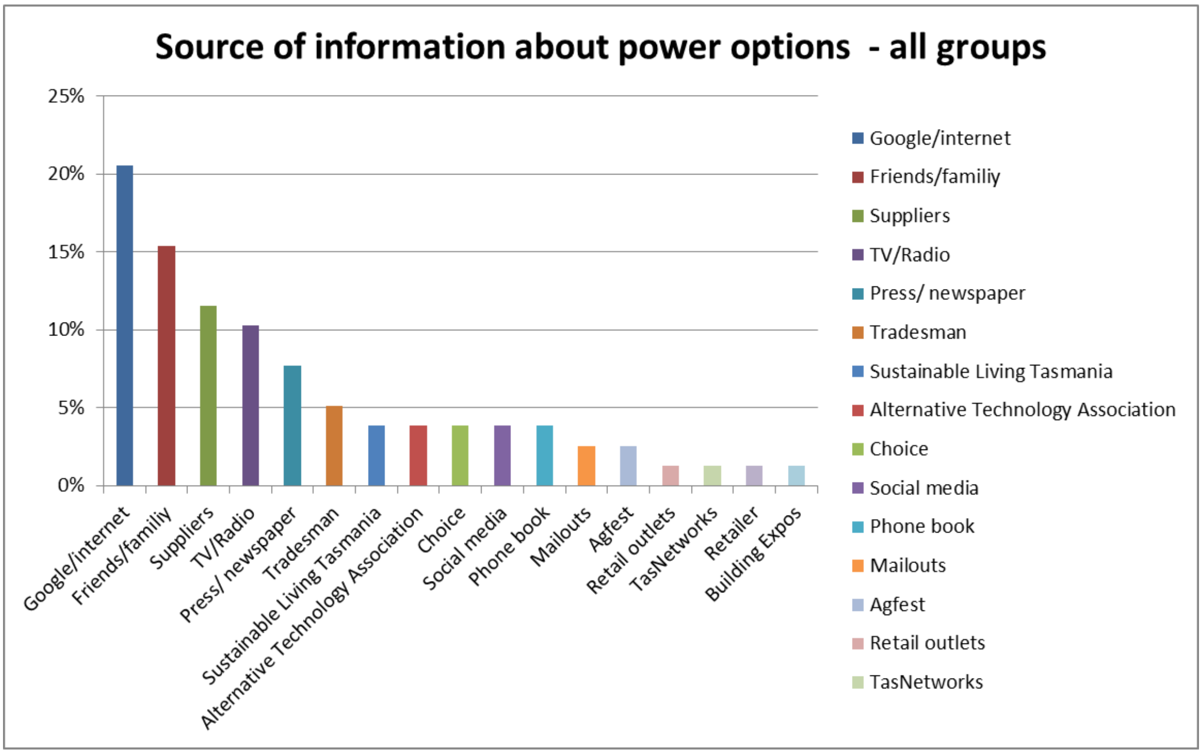
Overall, energy efficient appliances are the most commonly used option of those put to participants, with over 80% already using them and most of the remainder planning to adopt their use within five years. Gas was the next most popular with 35% of participants currently using it and another 15% planning to use it within the next five years. Solar electricity and hot water systems have some use (with 25% and 15% currently using respectively). Few participants who are not already using panels plan to adopt their use soon, however almost 50% of participants plan to adopt usage of a solar hot water system in the next 5 years. Other technologies that have little up take at the moment but many participants plan to install, include home energy management systems (44% plan to adopt in next 5 years) and batteries to store solar power (31%).

Table 1: Energy use options



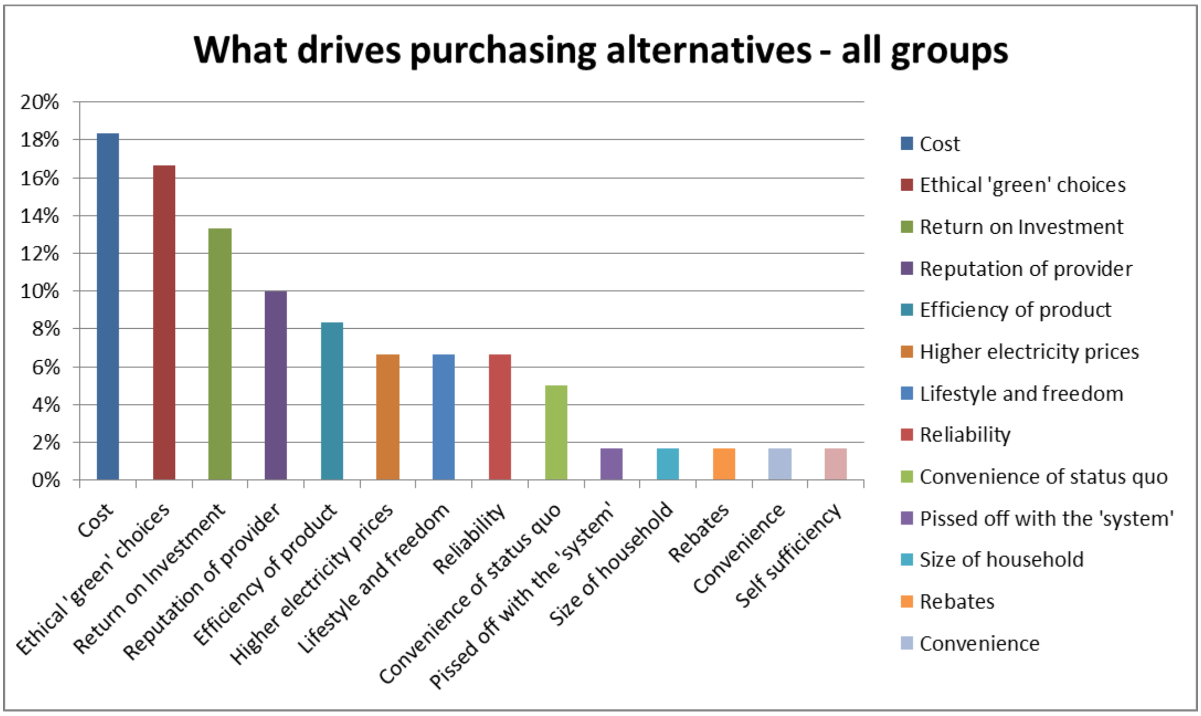
Source of information about power options

Participants were asked to nominate where they get information about power options. Both of the large groups gave a similar mix of answers, with the most popular option being google/the internet, followed by friends and family. Press/newspapers suppliers and TV/Radio rounded out the top five for both groups. Participants from Hobart nominated a wider range of sources than participants from Launceston; the total response was more divided among these and the most popular options received a smaller share of responses than from the Launceston group.



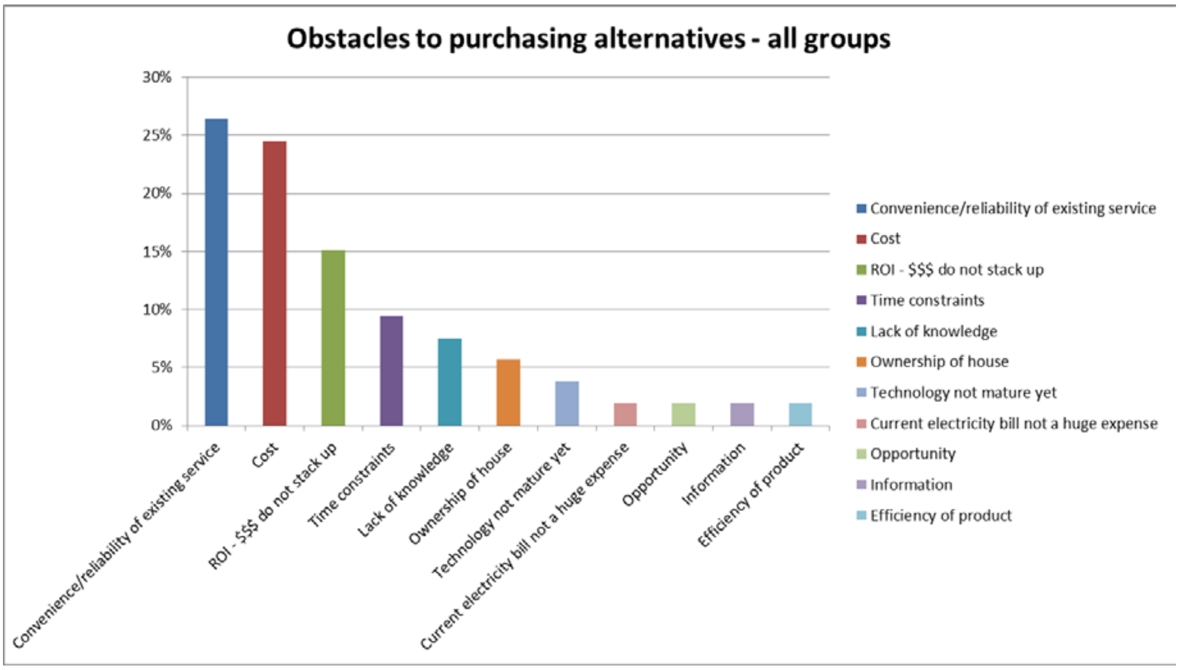
What drives the decision to purchase alternative power options

Participants were asked what drives the decision to purchase alternative power options. Responses were very different across groups. Whilst the Hobart group nominated ethical 'green' choices most frequently, followed by return on investment and then cost, the Launceston group nominated the reputation of the provider most frequently, followed by cost and then the efficiency of the product. The two groups had the same five reasons in each of their top five most nominated – in different orders, and this is ultimately reflected in the combined data.



What are the obstacles to purchasing alternatives

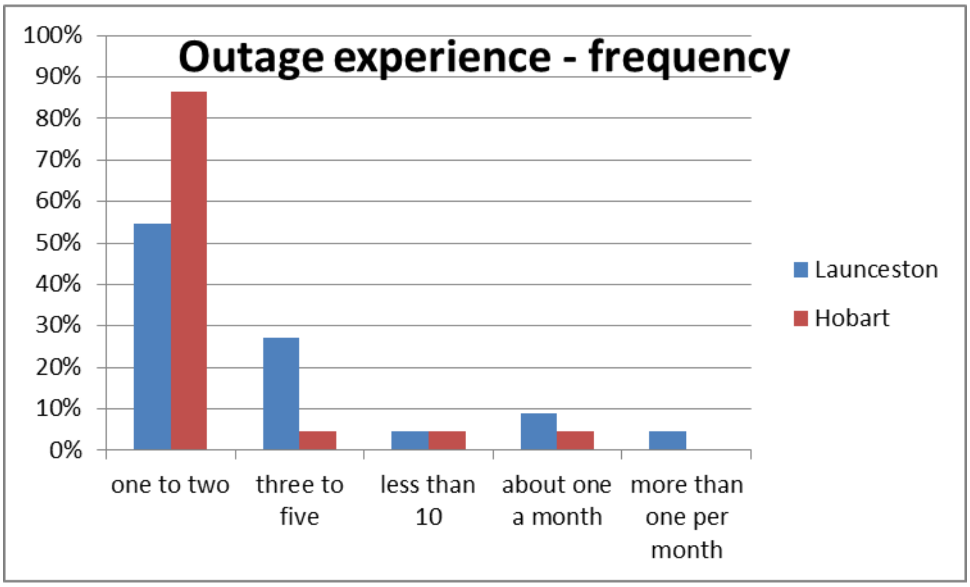
Both groups had the same top three most popular responses to this question, which were significantly more popular than the other responses – convenience/reliability of the existing service, cost and return on investment. The Hobart group had more respondents who nominated cost and return on investment, whereas the Launceston group had more respondents who nominated the convenience and reliability of the existing service.

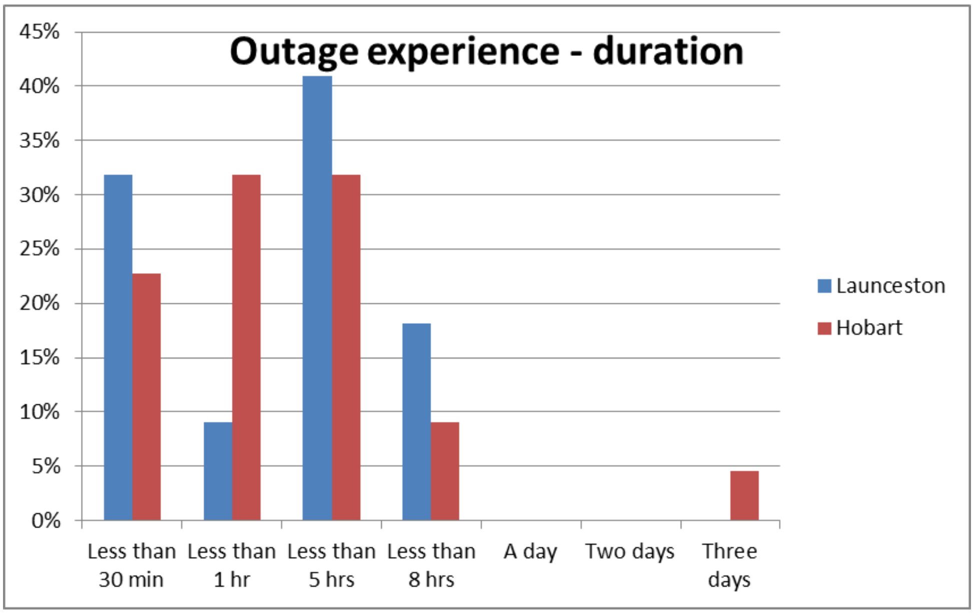


Service – Price trade-off

Outage experiences

The Hobart and Launceston groups reported different experiences of outages. The Hobart group reported fewer outages that lasted longer, whilst the Launceston group reported more outages of a shorter duration.

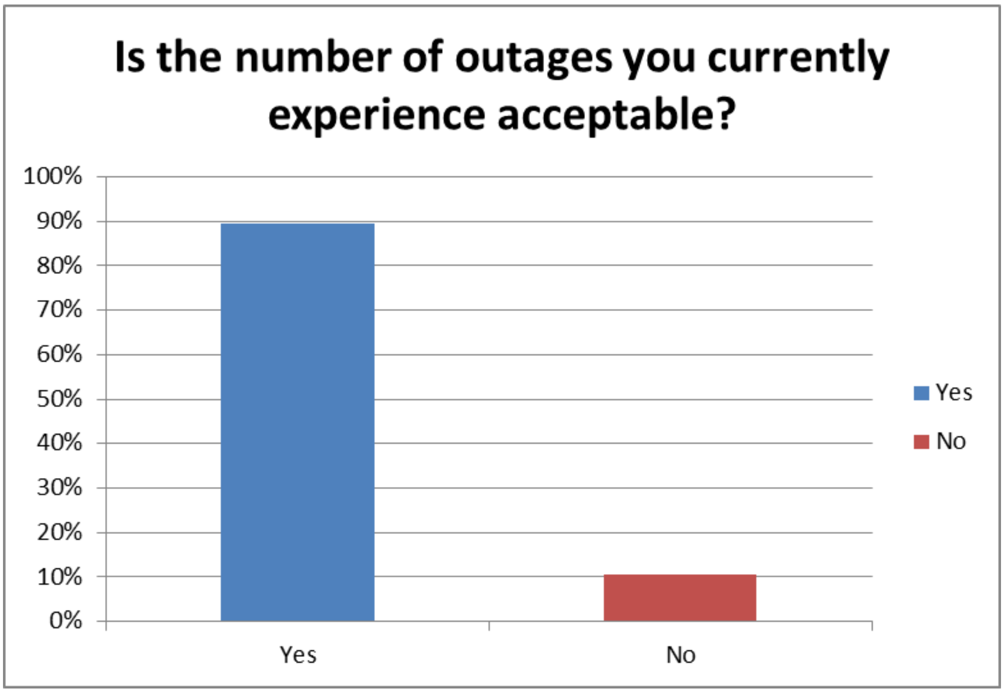


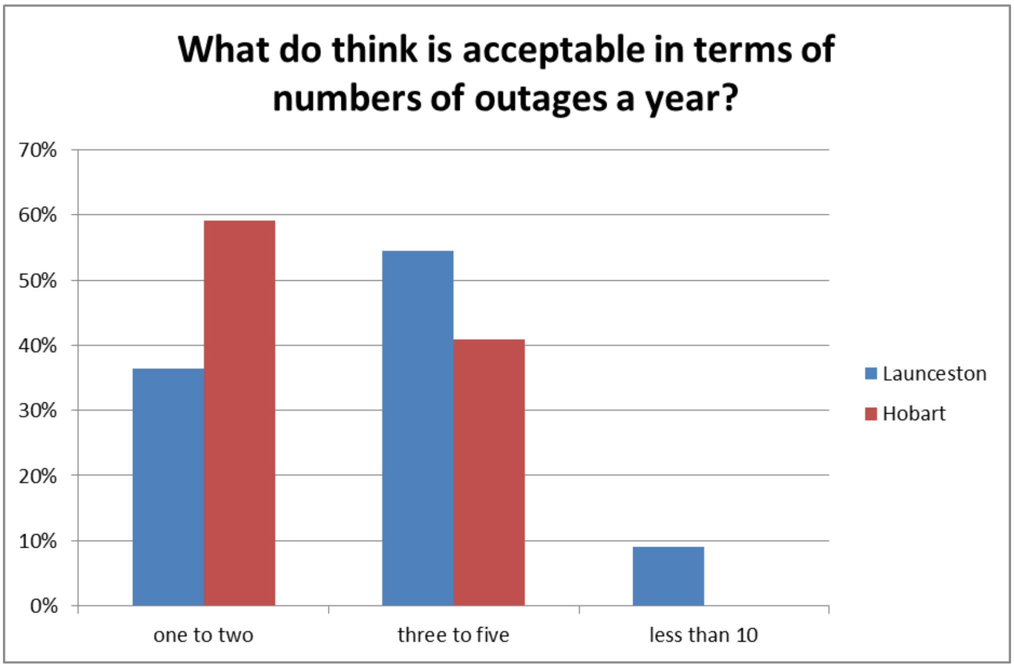


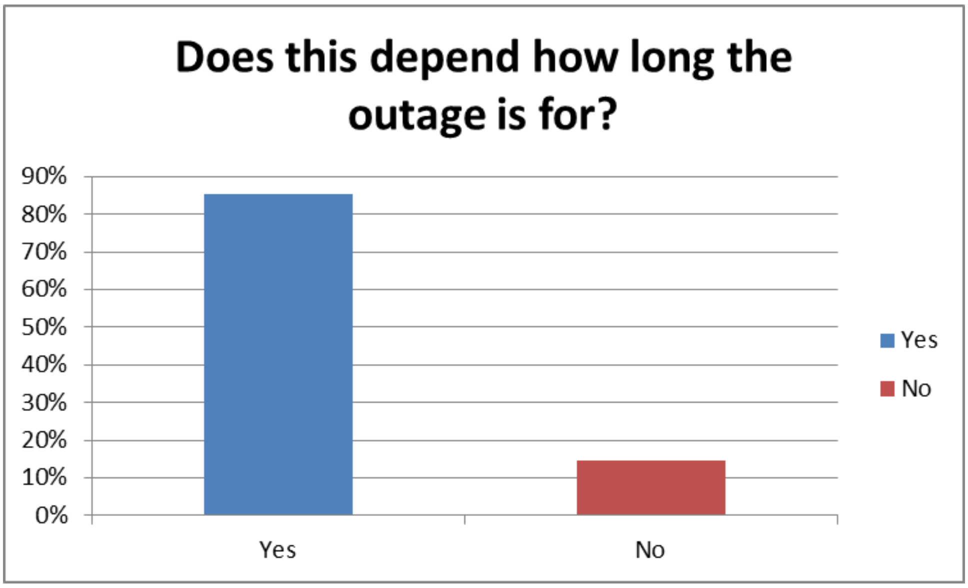
Outage expectations

The vast majority of all groups found the number of outages they had experienced to be acceptable (Hobart: 91%, Launceston: 86%, OCCC: 100%), even though they had experienced different numbers of outages. Similarly, when asked how many outages were acceptable, both groups answered similar numbers to the numbers they had experienced, with Hobart saying far fewer were acceptable, suggesting that people's expectations are 'anchored' to their current experiences and are more interested in things 'not getting worse' than in achieving an objective standard of service.

All groups overwhelmingly responded that the acceptable number of outages per year depended on how long the outages lasted.


Is the number of outages you currently experience acceptable?
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Yes
No
Yes
No


What do think is acceptable in terms of numbers of outages a year?
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
one to two
three to five
less than 10
Launceston
Hobart



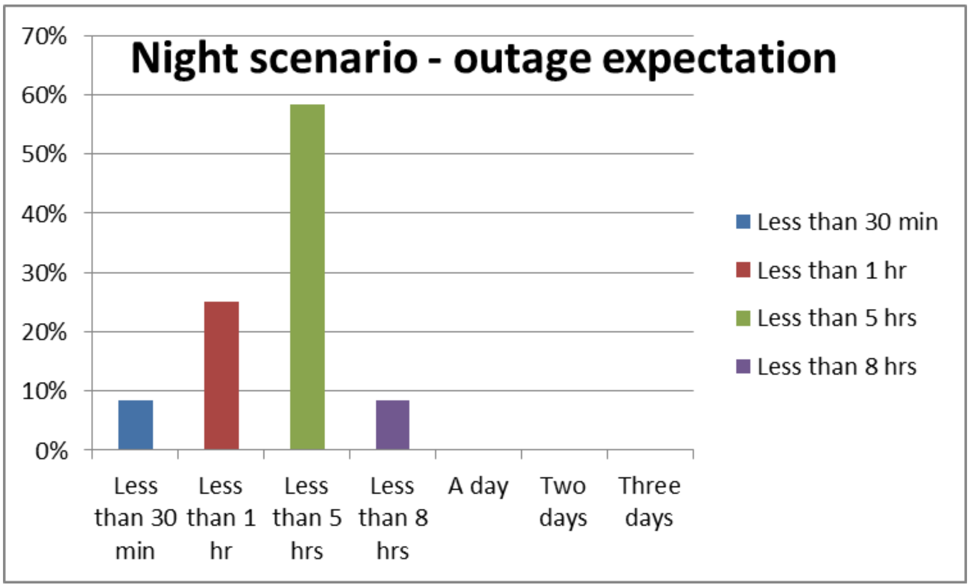
Outage expectations in different scenarios

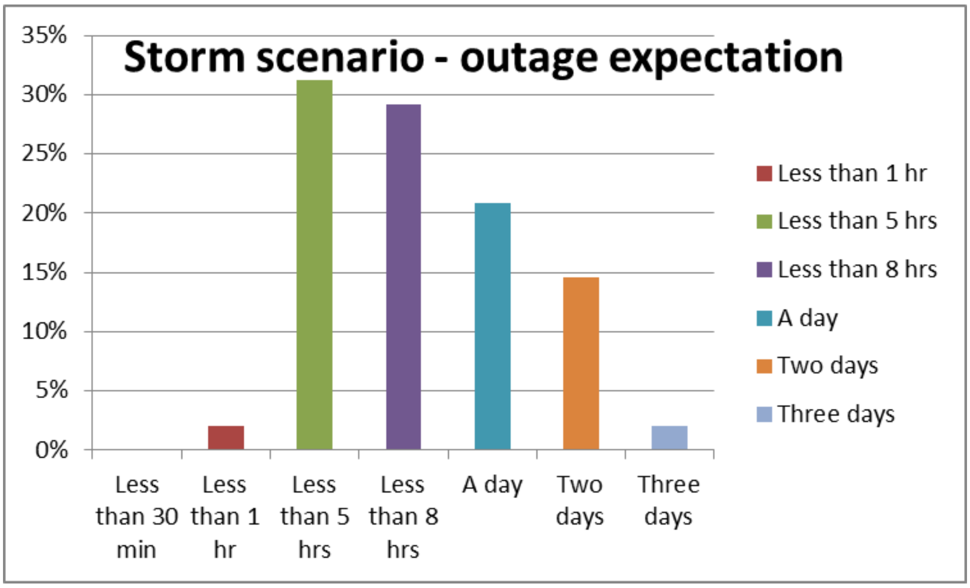
Participants were asked their expectations of an acceptable length of outages in different scenarios. The three scenarios were:

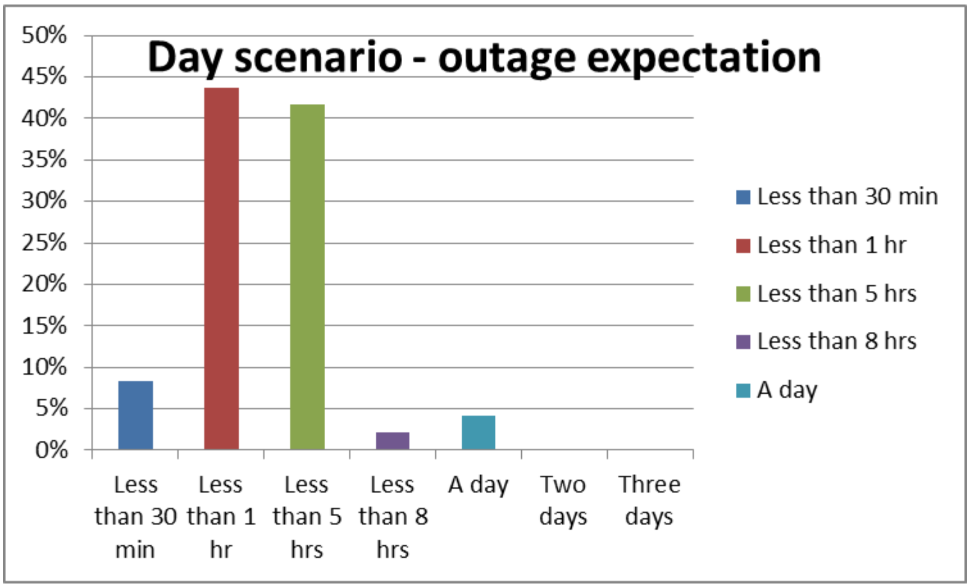
1. You're asleep. It is late in the night. The power goes off (Night)
2. Severe storms hit, there are mass outages across the state (Storm)
3. During the day. You are at work, home, out shopping or visiting a business (Day)

Both the Launceston and Hobart groups gave similar answers to the scenarios with only one exception.

All groups were more tolerant of outages in the storm scenario than the day or night scenario. In the day and night scenarios, participant overwhelmingly expected the outage to be solved in less than five hours, with a significant number expecting it to be solved within one hour for the day scenario. On the storm scenario, all groups had lower expectations and found longer waits acceptable, with most wanting it solved in less than eight hours, but a significant percentage finding an outage of one or even two days acceptable. The Hobart group was less likely to expect a shorter outage in the storm scenario, with none expecting an outage of less than one hour and a smaller percentage expecting an outage of less than five hours.


Night scenario - outage expectation
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Less than 30 min
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs
A day
Two days
Three days
Less than 30 min
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs

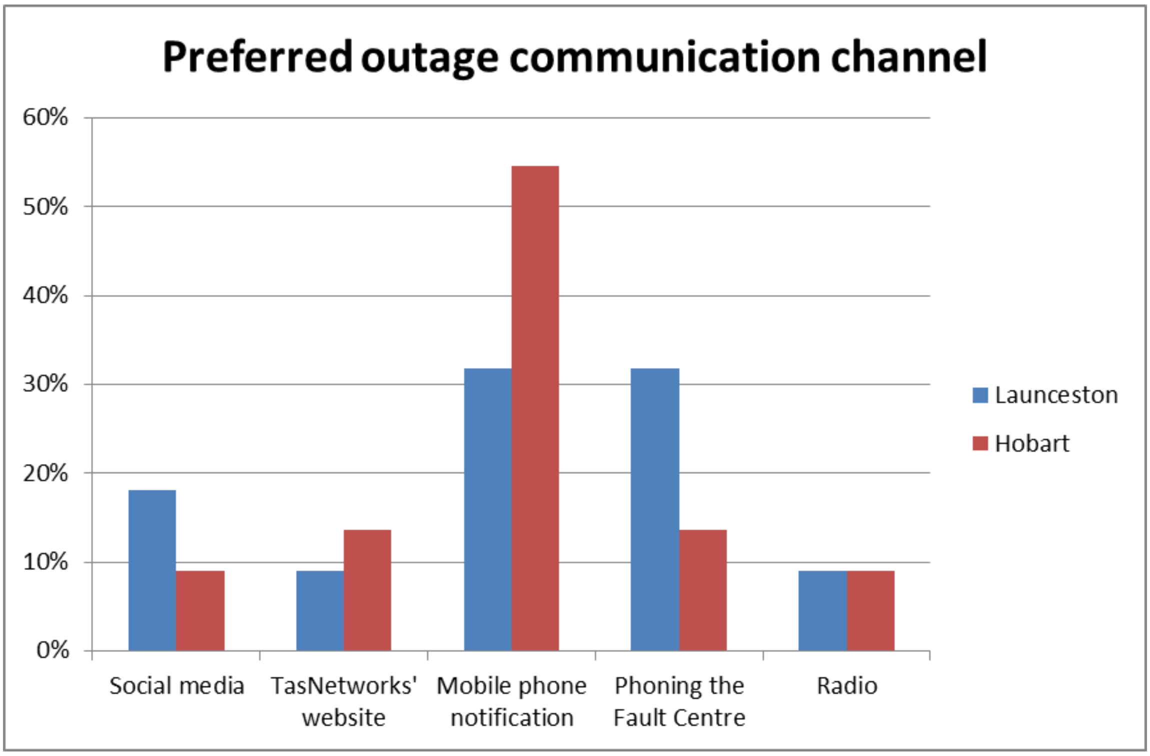

Storm scenario - outage expectation
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Less than 30 min
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs
A day
Two days
Three days
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs
A day
Two days
Three days


Day scenario - outage expectation
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Less than 30 min
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs
A day
Two days
Three days
Less than 30 min
Less than 1 hr
Less than 5 hrs
Less than 8 hrs
A day

Outage communication

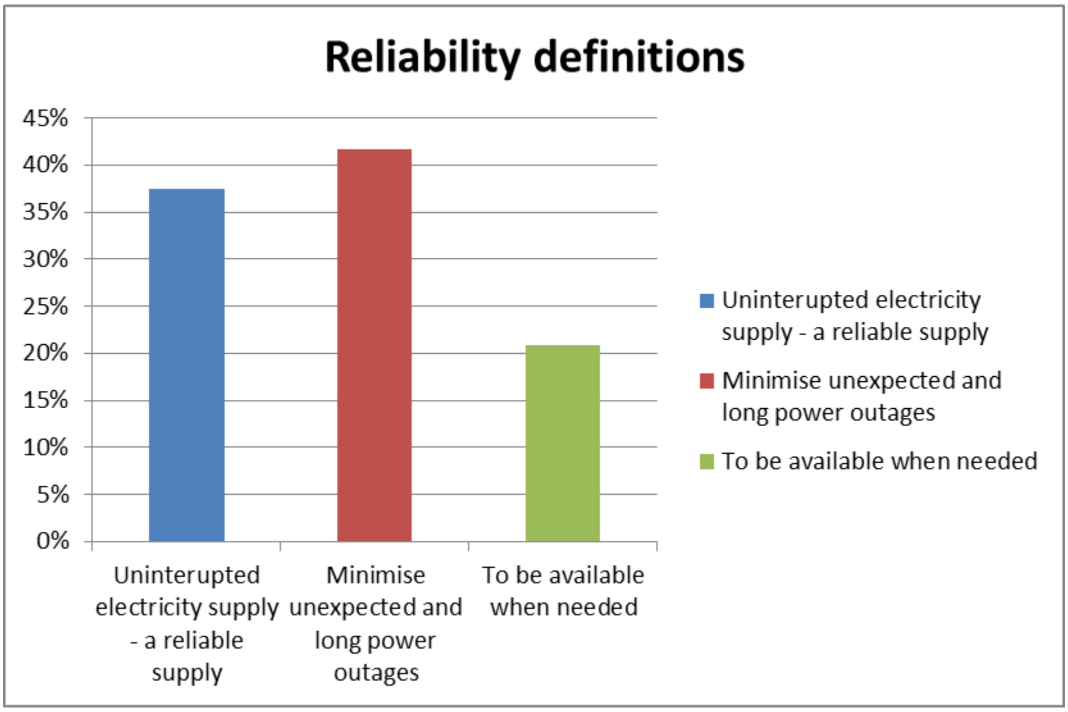
The Hobart and Launceston forum groups had very different preferred communication channels for outages.

Whilst mobile phone notification was a clear favourite in the Hobart group, in the Launceston group this method was equal favourite with phoning the fault centre. Notification via social media was also more popular with the Launceston group.



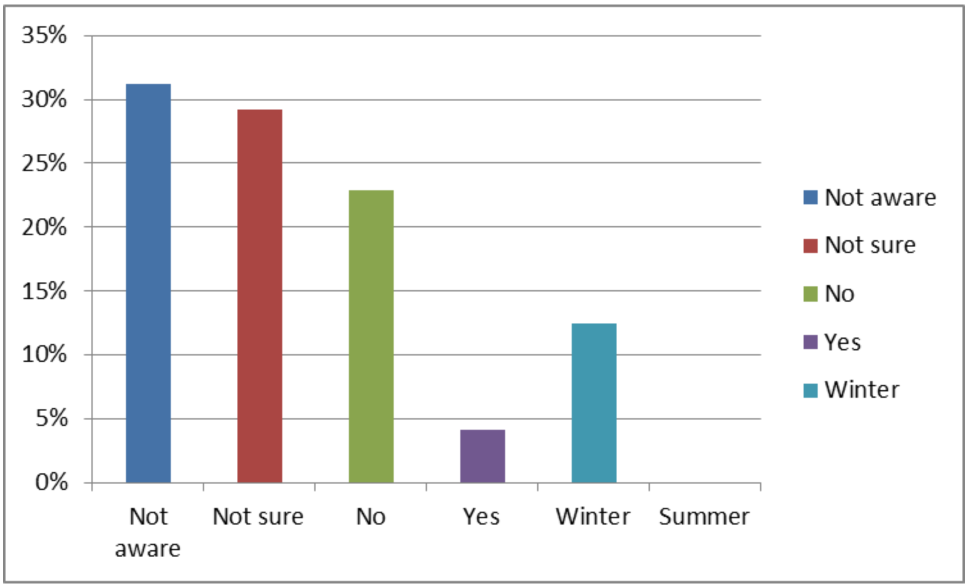
What participants understand reliability to mean

There was no significant difference between the two large groups. Both groups were split between "minimise unexpected and long power outages" and "Uninterrupted power supply – a reliable supply", with "to be available when needed" third.



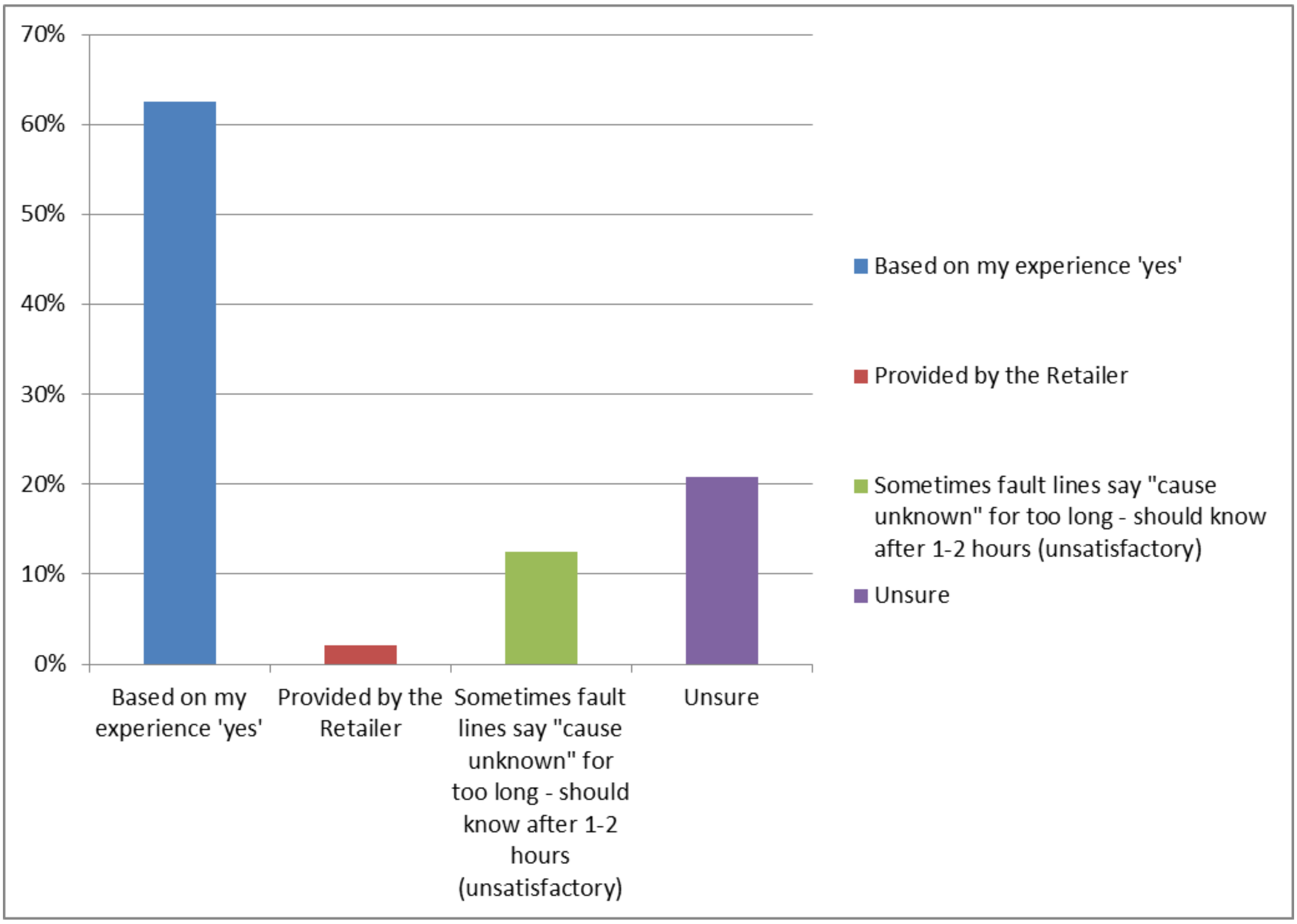
Whether outage lengths vary between summer and winter

The majority of responses to this question were either "not sure" or "not aware". For those that offered an opinion, "no" was the most popular response. Only in the Launceston group were there any "yes" responses (still a minority) as well as nominating winter as the season with longer outages. Overall, the participants did not feel that outage lengths varied between the seasons.



Whether TasNetworks provide accurate and timely information when unplanned outages occur

Both large groups gave very similar answers to this question. Whilst the majority answered "based on my experience, yes", there was a consistent minority across the groups who felt that fault lines say "cause unknown" for too long and that TasNetworks should know the cause after 1-2 hours. Some respondents were unsure.



TasNetworks Services

Services associated with TasNetworks

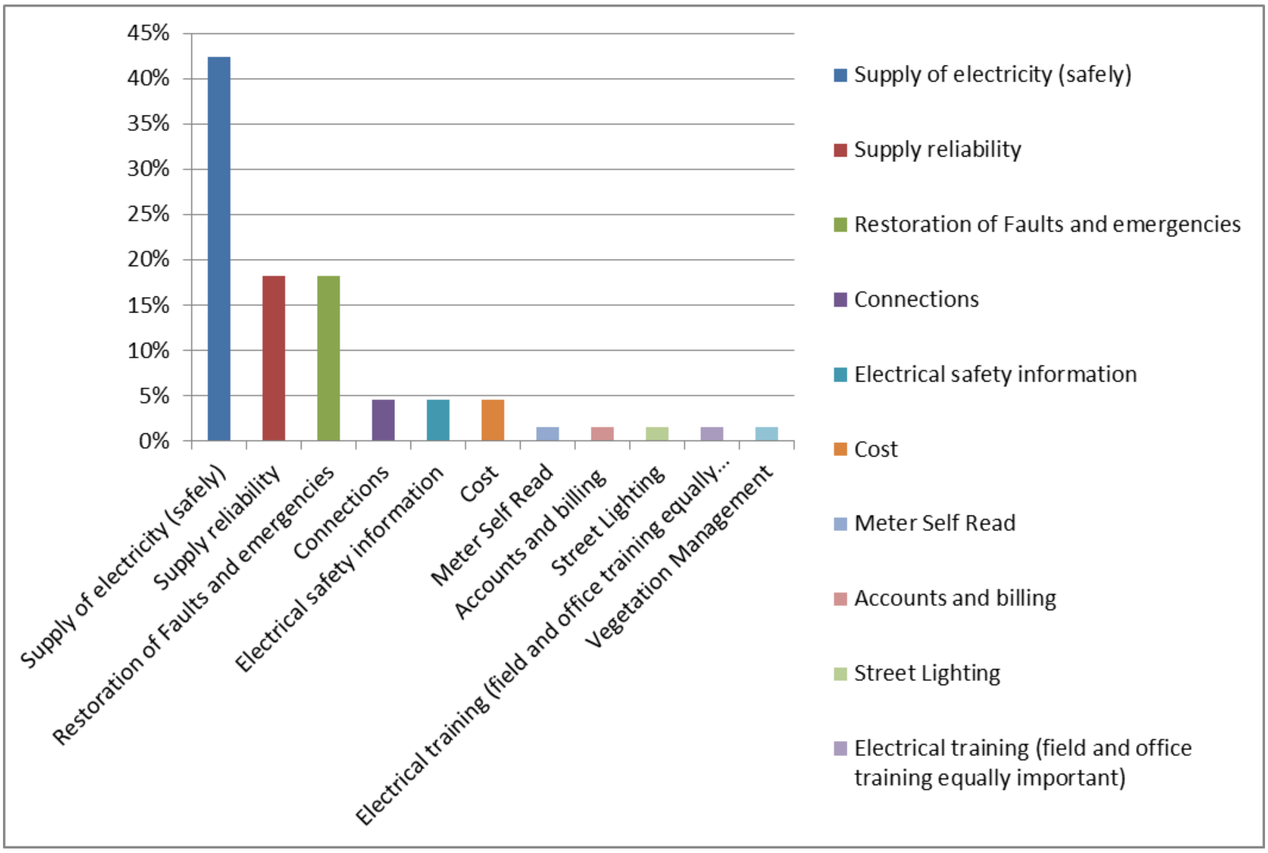
Participants were asked to discuss and list services associated with TasNetworks. The full list is quite extensive and is available in the raw data; services listed two or more times are given here.

- Maintenance
- Poles and wires (distribution)
- Rectification of power outages/storms
- Communications
- Meters and meter reading
- Transmission
- Supply electricity
- Connections and reconnections
- Street lighting

Top three services

Participants were then asked to rank the top three services provided by TasNetworks. These choices were then weighted according to rank (rank 1 = 3, rank 2 = 2 and rank 1 = 1).

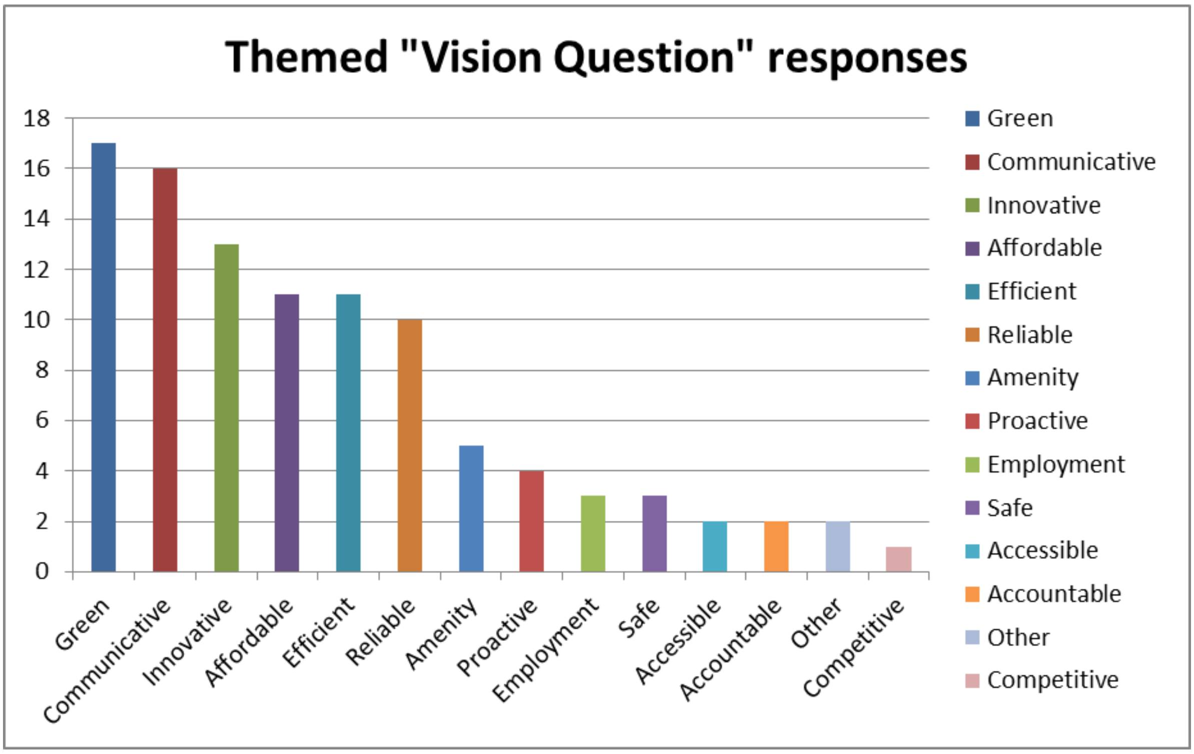
The two large groups gave very similar answers with the most popular service being "Supply of electricity (safely), followed by "Restoration of faults and emergencies" and "supply reliability". These services were nominated far more often than other services.



Vision Exercise

What participants thought "A better tomorrow" is

Participants were asked what they thought "a better tomorrow" is and all responses were recorded. These responses were then themed. Responses fell into 14 themes, with differences between the large groups. Hobart participants were more likely to cite affordability, whilst Launceston participants were more likely to advocate greater reliability and communication issues. Innovation and environmental concerns were popular with both groups. The smaller OCCC group nominated affordability most frequently.



A ‘wordle’ based on the nominated themes, where the size of words shows the comparative frequency of each theme.

STPIS Question

Whether participants support reduction of the revenue at risk parameter of the AER’s reliability incentive scheme

As part of TasNetworks consultation, customers were asked to consider the possible changes to the Service Performance Target Incentive Scheme (STPIS).

Customers were presented with TasNetworks’ overview and position:

> ***Schemes***
>
> *There are a number of schemes that the Regulator has introduced that are there to incentivise networks to be more efficient at what they do.*
>
> *There are two basic thrusts for these schemes:*
>
> - *to ensure that investment decisions are prudent; and*
> - *to ensure that service standards do not deteriorate.*
>
> *Investment decision schemes*

These schemes provide incentives for TasNetworks to minimise the level of expenditure (capex and opex) that is incurred for building, operating and maintaining the network. TasNetworks is incentivised to continually improve its performance by reducing our costs and ultimately the price to our customers.

<u>Service standard schemes</u>

These schemes provide incentives for TasNetworks to ensure that the level of service experienced by customers does not deteriorate over time. TasNetworks is incentivised to continually maintain and improve our service performance.

These schemes are all interlinked to ensure that networks don't trade between service and cost.

As an example – a network (such as TasNetworks) could save money (opex) by undertaking less maintenance or only restoring power supplies during normal operations. While this will result in a reward for reducing opex and ultimately the price to customers the level of network reliability will most likely deteriorate. To ensure this doesn't happen an incentive scheme is introduced to penalise TasNetworks for the resultant poor performance.

The scheme that we will discuss today is the Service Target Performance Incentive Scheme or STPIS.

<u>STPIS</u>

The STPIS is designed to reward or penalise TasNetworks for the service that it provides to its customers. This service is generally measured as the level of network reliability that is received during the year – power outages. It also includes a component that measures how well we respond to phone calls when the power goes out.

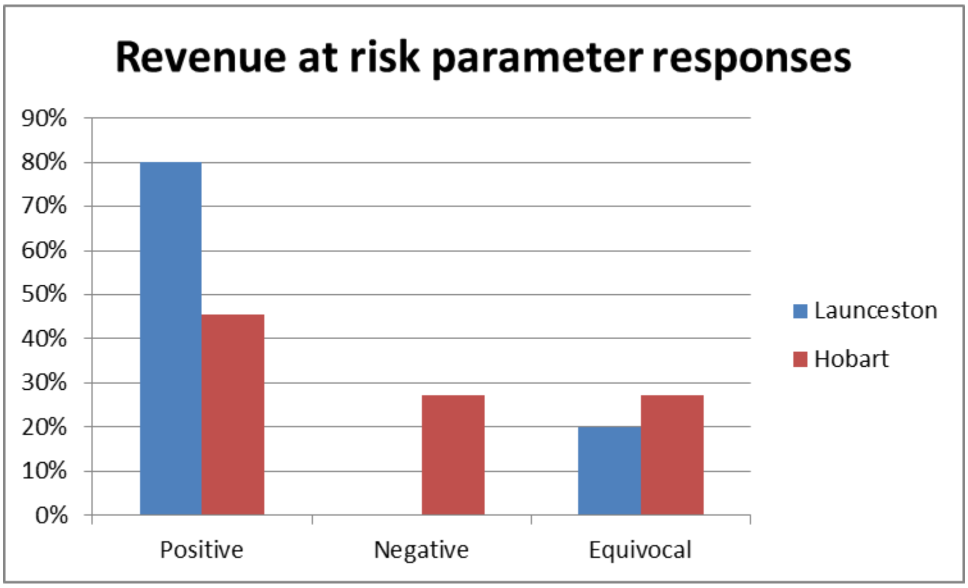
TasNetworks must compensate individual customers for having too many outages during the year or for outages that last for too long. You may know this as the Guaranteed Service Level or GSL Scheme. We are not aiming to change the GSL Scheme and it will remain part of the STPIS

The other part of the STPIS concerns the level of reliability that is recorded at a system level (the average reliability). The STPIS is designed to ensure that the average number and duration of all unplanned outages does not deteriorate. These outage vary significantly and are often not controllable by TasNetworks (eg weather) and we believe the incentives to maintain the level of reliability are too high and have an adverse effect on customer pricing outcomes – we want to reduce the level of the monetary incentive to ensure consistent pricing for our customers – we do not want to reduce or modify the level of service.

If we better all our targets we can receive a reward of up to five per cent of our allowable revenue – if we fail to meet all our targets we receive an equal penalty of up to five per cent. A very bad year followed by a very good year can result in a ten per cent change in revenue and therefore a large change in prices.

We want to reduce this to a 2.5 per cent penalty or reward to prevent this large variations occurring – do you think this is a good idea?

Participants were asked whether they would support reducing the "revenue at risk" scheme from five per cent to 2.5 per cent, a move that would reduce volatility in price levels, but potentially decrease the overall incentive for TasNetworks to either maintain existing levels; or improve reliability of the network. Responses were given in forum sub-group, based on the sub-group consensus. These responses were then categorised as positive, negative or equivocal. Responses were different between the Hobart and Launceston groups. Whilst in the Launceston group, the response was either positive or positive with some reservations, in the Hobart group it was much more mixed, with some opposition. Participants from the OCCC group, from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association Overall expressed support for the change. Overall, participants were in favour of the measure.



Whether participants support the proposed tariff principles

Participants were asked whether they supported the proposed five tariff principles:

1. Tariffs should be as simple as possible and developed in consultation with stakeholders
2. Tariffs should signal the economic costs of service provision for all customers
3. Tariffs should be based on a well-defined and clearly explained methodology
4. Tariffs should consider customer impacts where proposed tariffs would impose significant adjustment costs on users
5. Tariffs will be compliant with the rules and meet local pricing obligations

Responses were given in forum sub-group, based on the sub-group consensus. These responses were then categorised as positive, negative or equivocal. Overall there was broad support for the principles, with 11 positive responses, no negative responses and three equivocal responses. Comments on the principles sometimes questioned principle 4, one questioned principle 5 and some comments proposed extra principles. These comments are included below.

- "With regard to principle 4 (price pathing) - should be able to be reviewed if not working properly)"
- "Agree with the first three - don't agree with 4 (price pathing) and don't believe Principle 5 is required (comply with rules)"
- "Tariff Principles
  1 - Yes - get consumers opinions
  2 - Yes - user pays. The work 'all' changed to 'each'
  3 - Yes - need transparency, make informed decisions, people need to understand why their bill is so big and what that can do to reduce
  4 - Don't agree entirely - options should be available now, if some are putting less strain on the network, they pay the same as others who use power at peak times. This should already be reflected in tariffs."

- “Agree with all principles - would be good to consider transparency too”
- “Should consider transparency”

Alignment of resets

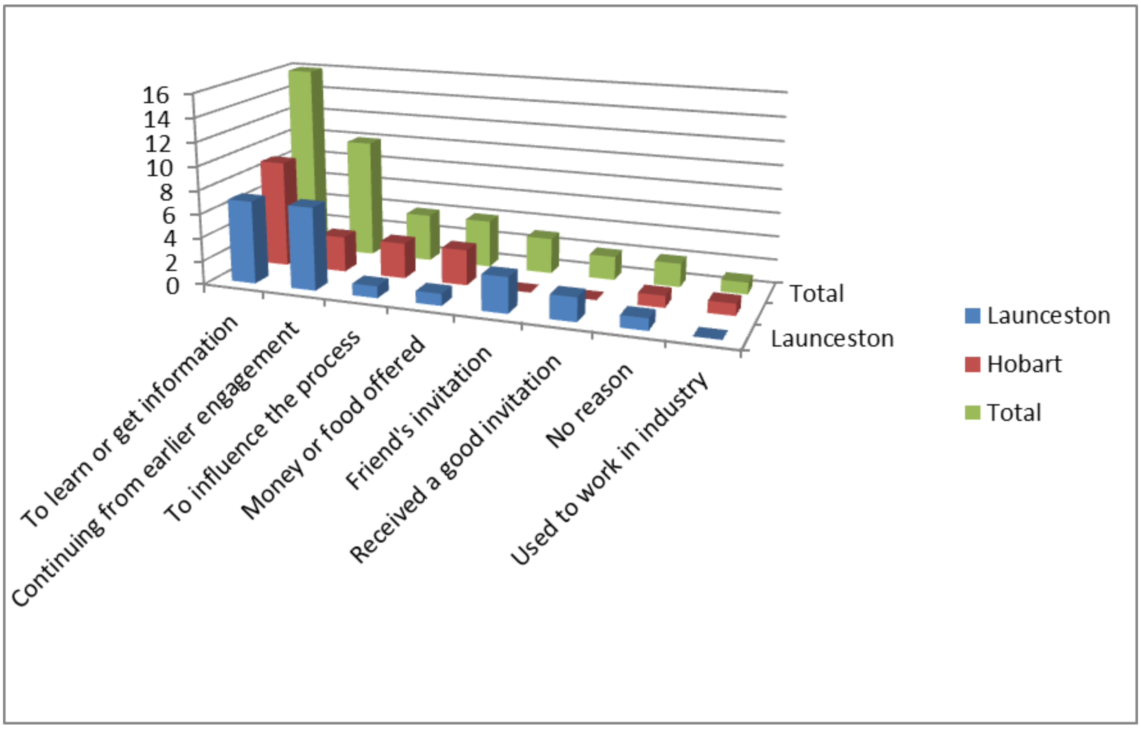
Participants in the OCCC group were asked about the alignment of resets. Their comments are below.

- “Yes - as long as its centred on engagement”
- “Yes - as long as it doesn't add to costs”
- “Yes - support alignment”
- “Yes - important to consider planning and future needs”

4 Pre-Forum Survey

Why people participated

The Launceston and Hobart forum participants gave a different mix of answers to the question “why did you participate today?”. If multiple reasons were given, the first answer was taken and responses were analysed and grouped into themes. A large proportion of both groups had participated in order to learn more about the electricity industry in Tasmania. Whilst many participants from Launceston nominated a desire to continue after the first round of engagement as the reason they participated, this motivation was less present in the Hobart group. Some participants in the Launceston group participated because friends had invited them to; no participant from Hobart nominated this as a reason they participated.

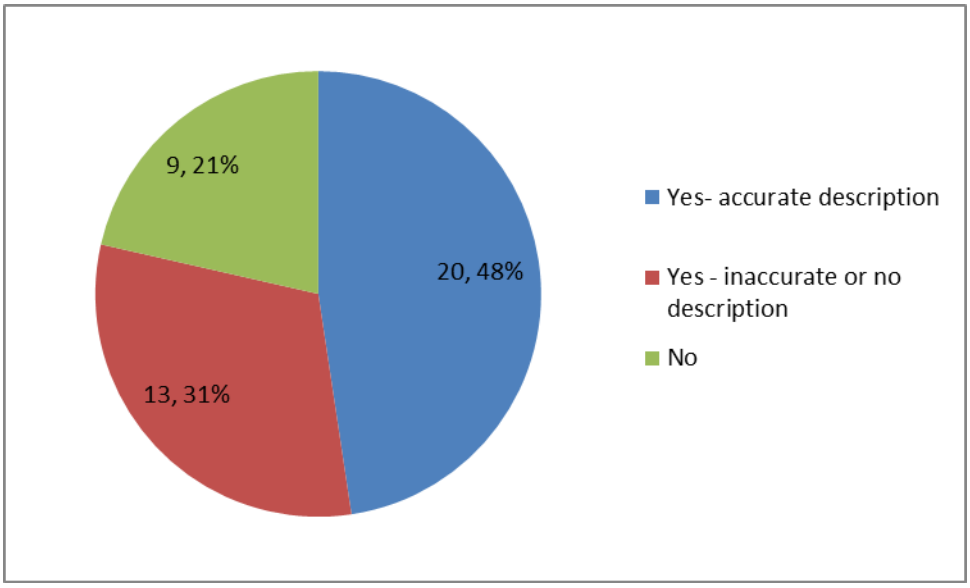


Whether participants understood the electricity supply chain

The participants were asked "Do you feel you understand the electricity supply chain (if so, give a brief outline)?"

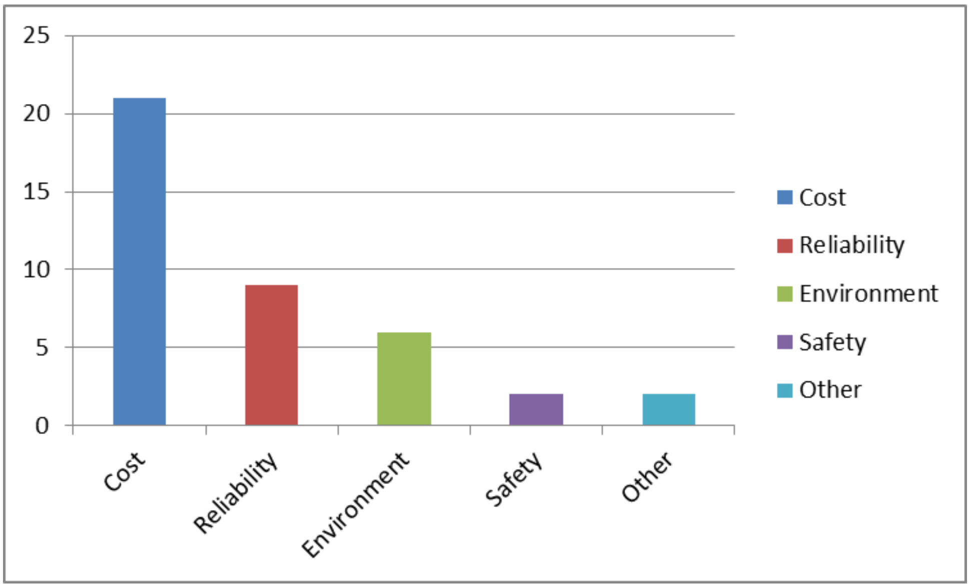
Responses to this question were put into three categories: those who said they did not understand the industry, those who said they did but then did not describe it accurately or did not give a description, and those who said they did and gave an accurate description. An accurate description was defined as describing the separation of generation, transmission and electricity retail and was interpreted generously.

Overall around 50% of the participants from both forums were able to accurately describe the electricity supply chain, with the remaining 50% split between inaccurate descriptions and/or answering that they could not describe the supply chain. There was no significant difference between the Launceston and Hobart groups.



Which aspect of the electricity industry concerned participants most

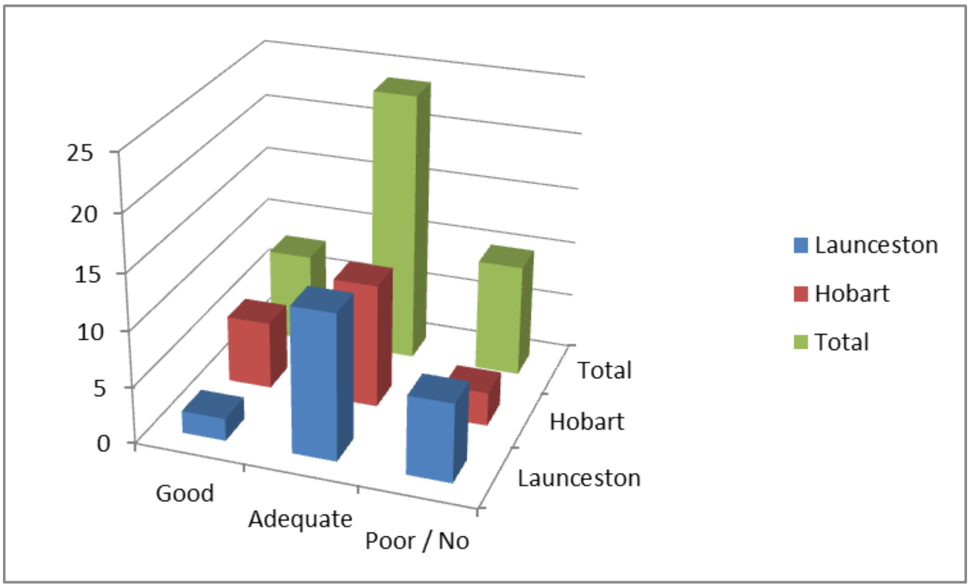
Participants were asked “When thinking about the Electricity industry, what aspect or issue concerns you most?”. If multiple aspects were nominated, the first answer was taken and responses were analysed and grouped into themes. There was no significant difference between the two groups. Cost was the aspect that concerned participants the most, followed by reliability and environmental concerns.



Whether participants knew what TasNetworks does

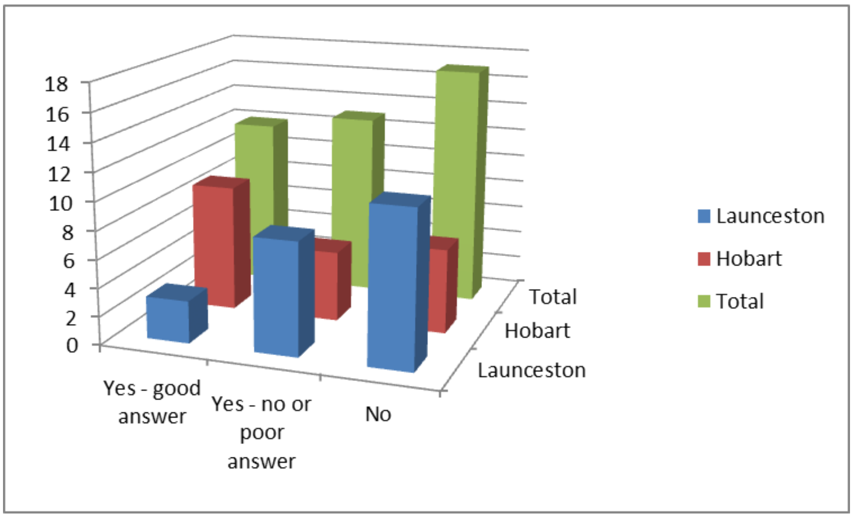
Participants were asked “What does TasNetworks do?”. Responses were put into three categories – a good description (mentions transmission and distribution, or demonstrated understanding that Tasnetworks covers all steps between generation and the consumer but not generation.), an adequate description (understands TasNetworks is responsible for ‘supply’ or similar) or a poor / no description (includes incorrect descriptions, such as that TasNetworks ‘generates’ electricity).

Overall, the Hobart group had a better understanding of what TasNetworks does, with more 'good descriptions, and less 'poor / no' descriptions. In both groups, an 'adequate' description was the most common response – a typical participant understood that TasNetworks is involved in the 'supply' of electricity.



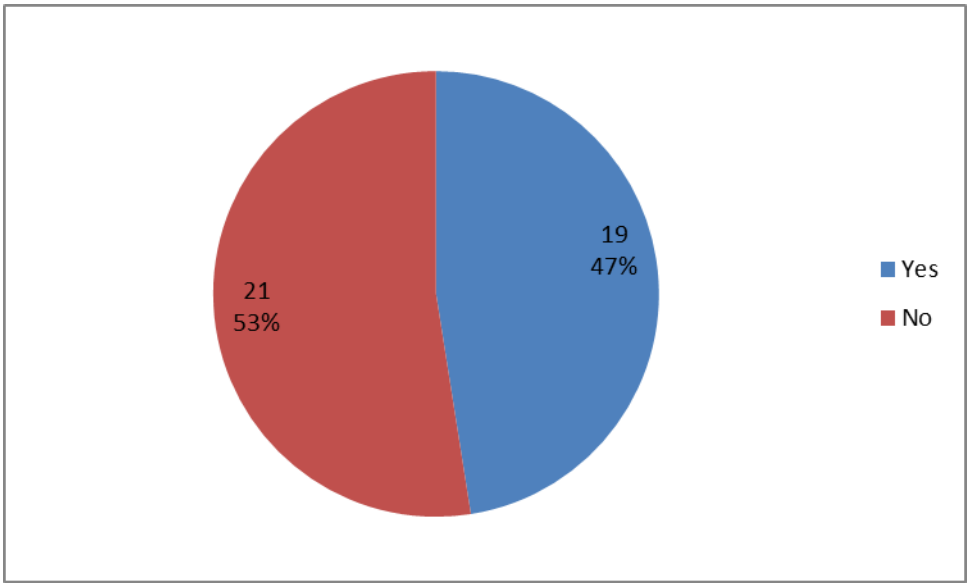
Whether participants felt they had a good idea of how TasNetworks decisions might affect them

Participants were asked "Do you feel you have a good idea of how TasNetworks decisions might affect you (if so, how)?". Responses were put into three categories – Yes, with a good description of how the decisions might affect them (that it could affect cost and/or reliability of service), yes with no description or a poor/incorrect description, and 'no'. There was a big difference between the Launceston and Hobart groups when answering this question. The Launceston group had much less understanding of how TasNetworks decisions might affect them, with many more 'no' responses and few 'yes' responses with good descriptions.



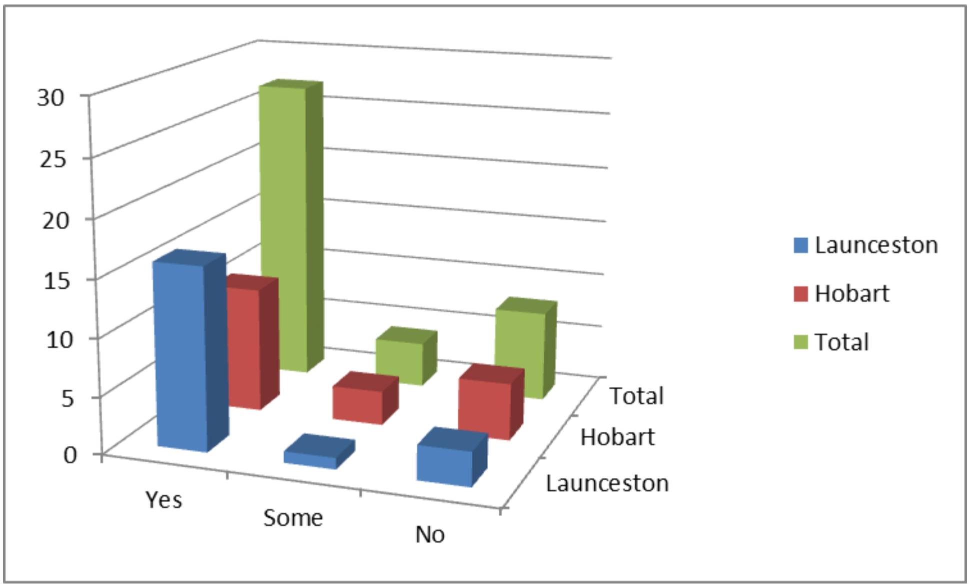
Whether participants had participated in a community engagement process before

Participants answered this question by circling ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Both groups were almost evenly split between those who hadn’t participated before and those who had.



Whether participants felt they had a good understanding of the purpose of community engagement

Participants were asked “Do you feel you have a good understanding of the purpose of community engagement?”. Responses were put into three categories – “yes”, “no” (includes ‘not really’) and “some” (includes ‘some’, ‘somewhat’, ‘Kind of’ etc.). Overall, participants were generally confident they understood the purpose of community engagement, with majorities of both groups responding ‘yes’. Hobart participants were more likely to answer ‘yes’ compared with Launceston participants.

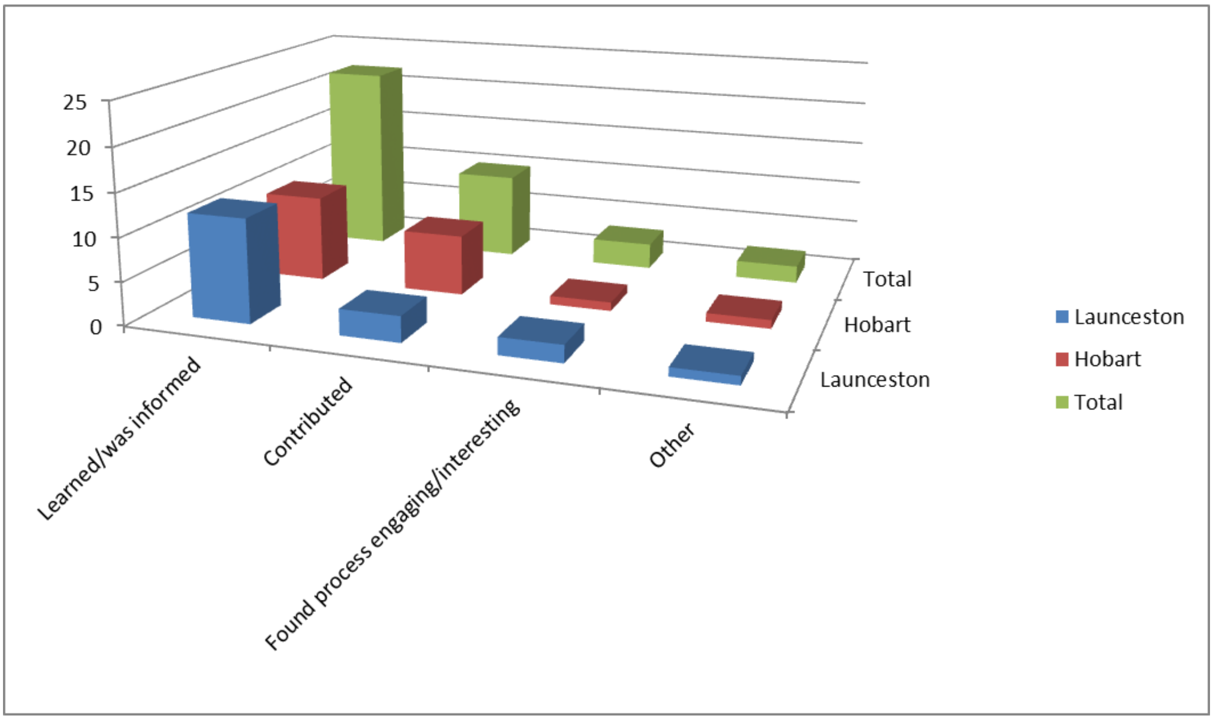


5 Post Survey forum

Whether participants felt their participation was worthwhile and why/why not

All participants from both forums felt that their participation was worthwhile.

When giving reasons why the forum was worthwhile, participants in both forums most frequently cited that they had learned something or been informed by the process. The second most popular reason in both groups was that the participant felt they had made a contribution. The third most popular reason participants felt it was worthwhile was because they felt that the process was engaging and/or interesting.



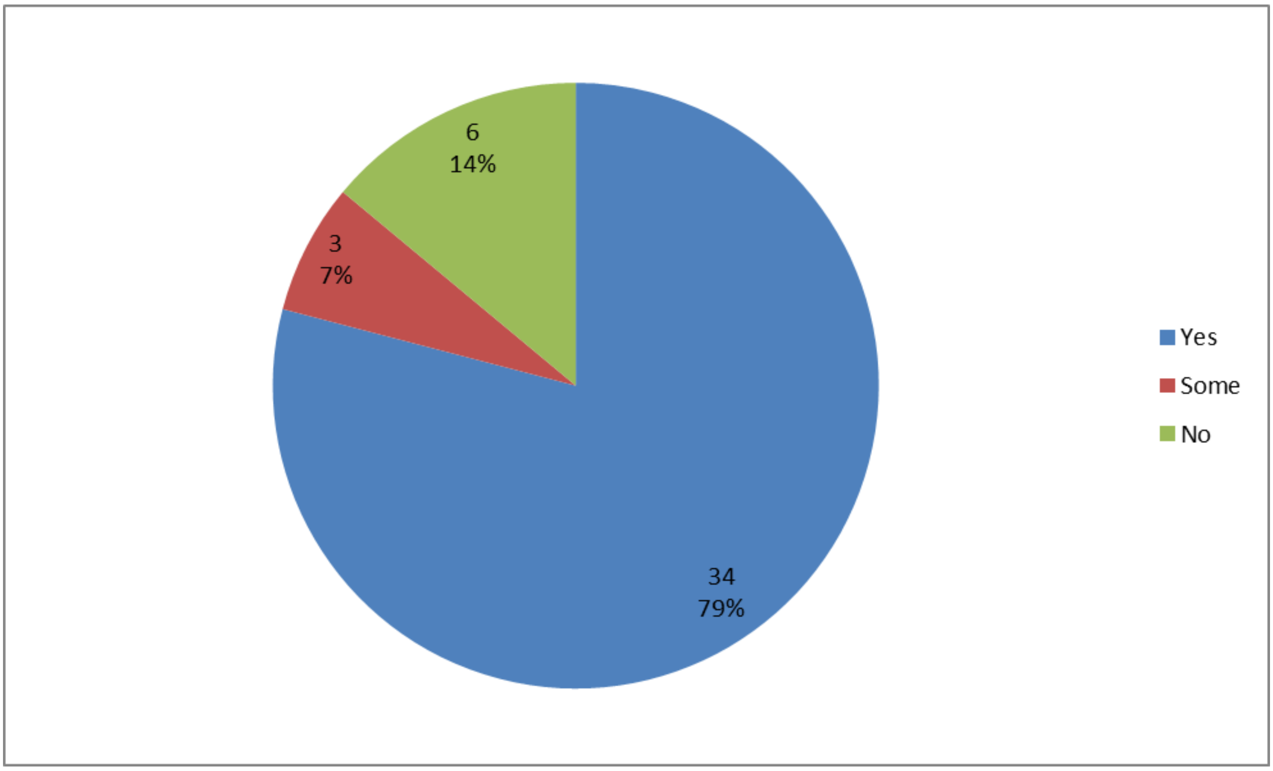
Whether participants felt they had a better understanding of the electricity industry and what Tasnetworks does

All participants in both forums who answered these two questions felt they had a better understanding of the electricity industry and what TasNetworks does. One participant from the Hobart forum who didn't record an answer to the question on TasNetworks wrote a comment "There was a great amount of information I am still absorbing".

Whether participants understand TasNetworks' decision making process

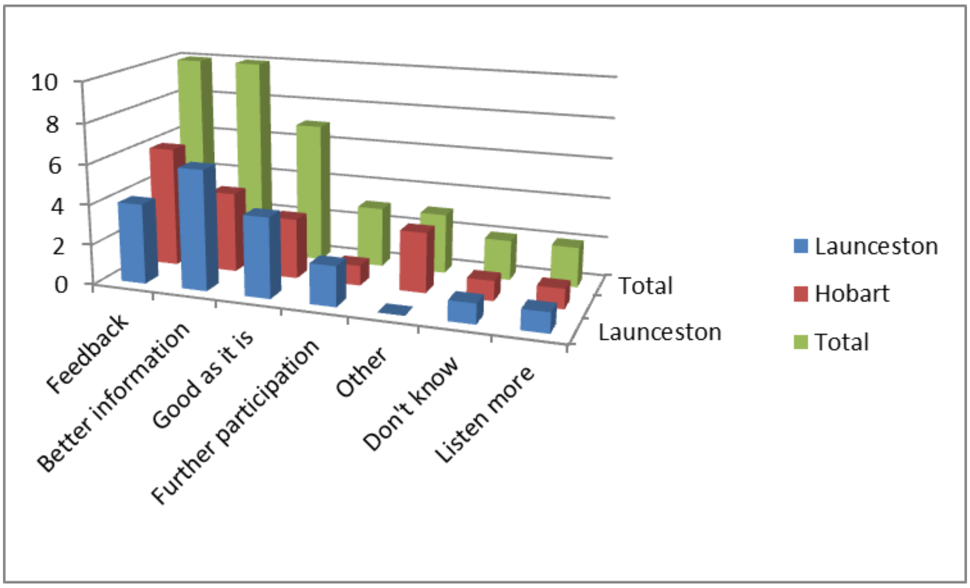
The majority of both forums answered yes to this question, with just three participants in each forum answering 'no' (or writing a comment that implied an answer of 'no'). There were three participants in the Launceston forum who thought they understood the decision making process 'somewhat'. Comments from 'no' answers:

- "It seems like they are trying to get consumer feedback , but when it comes to electrical engineering matters what possible informed decision could we give"
- "A little hard to follow"
- "Not really - this issue, yes, but little about the decision making process"



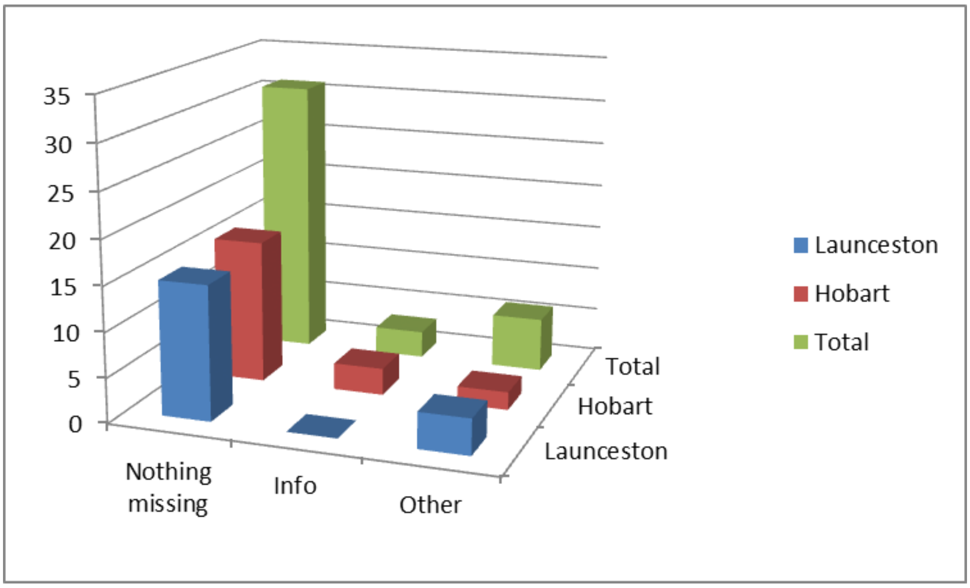
What participants would need to feel they had meaningfully contributed to TasNetworks' future planning

Participants were asked "What information and process would you need to feel that you had meaningfully contributed to TasNetworks future planning?". Responses were grouped according to theme. Response themes were similar for both forums. The most popular themes for both forums were that participants wanted to received feedback on how TasNetworks is using their contributions, that they would have liked or would like more or better information and that the process is good as it is. Some participants wanted to participate in future forums. One participant from each forum did not feel that participants were listened to enough.



Whether participants felt anything was missing from the forum

Participants were asked “Do you think something was missing from today's forum? Please provide details”. Most participants in both forums did not feel that anything was missing from the forums. Three participants wanted more or better information, and there were six other things nominated.

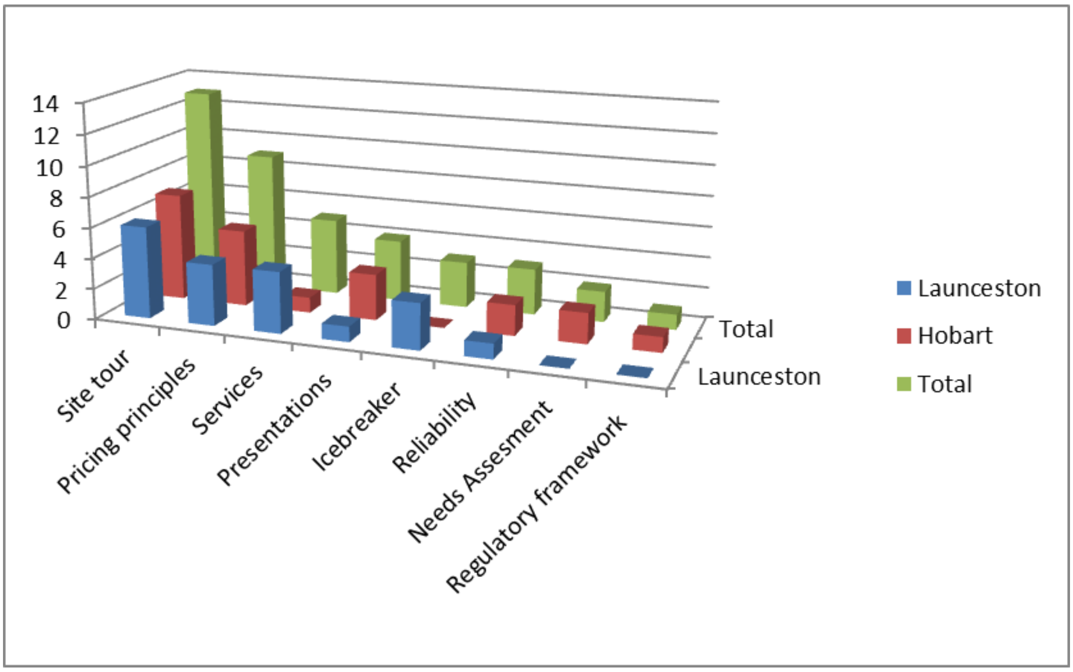


Whether participants would be interested in participating in an ongoing engagement process

Participants were asked “If TasNetworks decided to undertake an ongoing engagement process, such as a consumer referral group, would you be interested in participating?”. Every participant in both forums indicated they would be interested.

Which activity/session participants enjoyed the most

Participants were asked “What was the activity/session you enjoyed most?”. Where someone nominated multiple activities or sessions, the first nominated activity or session was taken as their answer. Two participants answered “all” or “all except…”. These responses were not included in the tally. Both groups enjoyed the site tour the most, followed by the pricing principles exercise. The TasNetworks Services exercise was also a common favourite in the Launceston group.



Why participants enjoyed different activities/sessions the most

Participants were also asked why they made the choices they did. Representative comments for each of the top three choices are given.

Site Tour

- "Learning more about the way our electricity is delivered"
- "Now I understand the power lines"
- "Broke up the day's session and interesting to see actual infrastructure and it's workings"
- "John's extensive knowledge and willing ability share"
- "It's a side of the power industry that the general public don't get to see/be informed about"

Pricing Principles

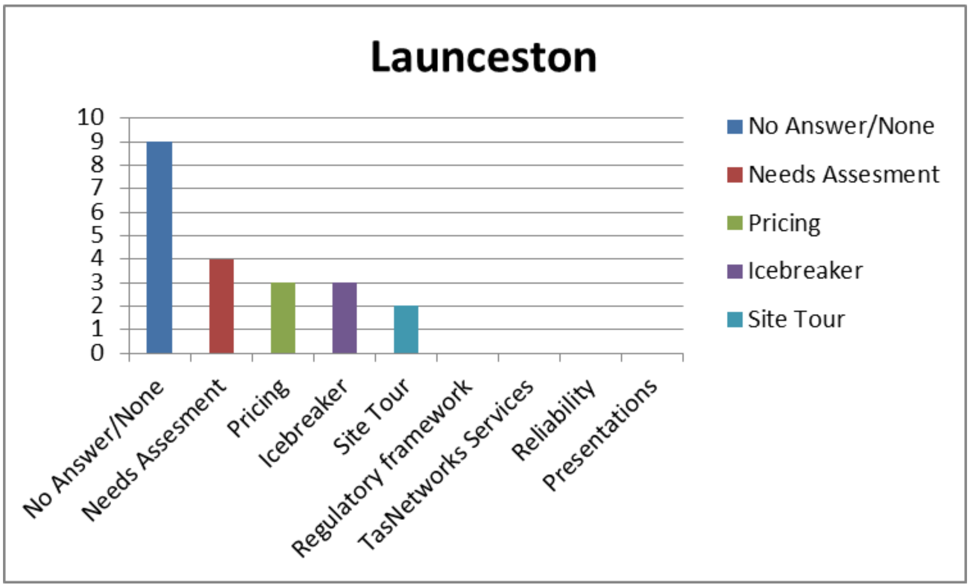
- "This is the area that can provide the benefits"
- "It is what drives an efficiency of any business and keeps a healthy relationship between them and the end consumer"
- "Understood the pricing problem better"
- "It made us think very hard about usage and conserving energy in direct correlation to pricing"
- "I felt that my opinion was noticed and has potential to be acted on"

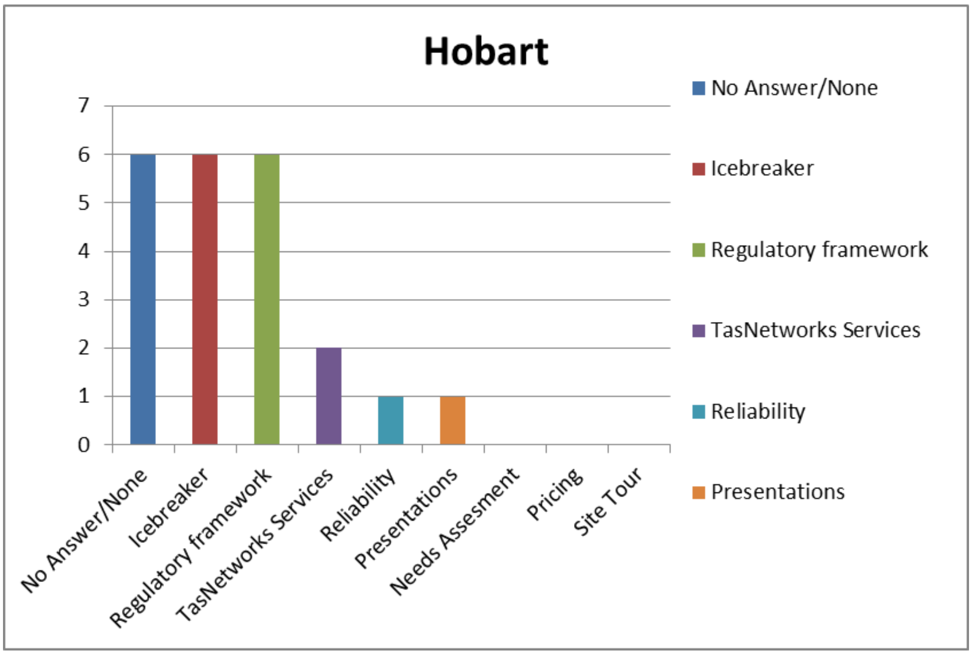
TasNetworks Services

- "It was interesting to learn what services TasNetworks supplies"
- "Good to deliberate and discuss with others, helps put info into perspective"
- "There is a lot more to the TasNetworks than I thought"

Which services/activities participants enjoyed the least

Participants were asked "What was the activity/session you least enjoyed?". Many participants did not nominate an activity, or wrote "none", "N/A", etc – these responses were counted. The two groups gave very different responses to this question. In the Launceston group, the most popular answer was "None/ No answer", with the remaining answers split quite evenly between the needs assessment exercise, the pricing principles exercise, the icebreaker and the site tour. The Hobart participants gave less "None/No answer" responses and nominated two exercises in particular – the regulatory framework exercise and the icebreaker exercise.





Why participants enjoyed different activities/sessions the least

Participants were also asked why they made the choices they did. Representative comments for each of the overall top three choices are given.

Icebreaker exercise

- “Been involved in too many ice breaker exercises in the past. Not your fault.”
- “Show us the cube”
- “Linkage with the forum content not well defined”
- “I want to know!!!! Show me!!”

Regulatory framework

- “Bit confusing”
- “It was the least interesting to me”
- “Just before lunch - a movement (game etc) activity to wake up the brain”
- “Too much detailed talking just before lunch, It was hard going, was losing interest.”

Needs Assessment

- “Didn't understand what the point of it was”
- “Because it was basically an internet survey on the wall”
- “Actually enjoyed all activities, but this one took a little more thought to get”

What participants thought could have been improved

Most responses and comments indicated that participants did not think the forum could be improved. All comments that indicated something that could be improved are listed below.

Launceston forum:

- “Perhaps a prepared paper in hardcopy”
- “Seemed good. John should say "um" a bit less.”
- “Everything was well organised”
- “Probably could go longer because I think we only scraped the skin of the custard”
- “Maybe a couple of power points/video presentations could show ideas better (and be used later for general community education).”

Hobart forum

- “No, it was evenly paced and varied. Perhaps less "talking heads" presentations”
- “I did not understand the problem TasNetworks experiences with the feed to the network from solar generation. Also interested about a new retailer buying power in bulk from Hydro and reselling to consumer. Could not a retailer approach solar generators about buying their generation and selling to other consumers? TasNetworks need to invest or consider more generation from private solar into the distribution network.”
- “Real life scenarios that allow us to analyse effect of change on a variety of customers”

Whether participants thought the $150 stipend was a good incentive for participation

All participants in both forums who answered this question responded positively, that it was a good incentive. Some also indicated that they enjoyed the lunch, and the educational experience. Two indicated that they wouldn't have required the stipend to participate.

6 Appendix A – Facilitator's Handbook