



MEDIA RELEASE- 21st September 2017

Businesses reveal impact of rising power bills

Businesses across regional Queensland are continuing to provide information about how rising power bills are impacting on them.

Coordinator of the Queensland Electricity Users Network (QEUN) Jennifer Brownie is urging more businesses in the Mt Isa, Whitsundays and the Southern Downs regional council areas to participate in an online electricity survey.

“Power bills for regional businesses have risen by 15 to 20 percent over the last two years but there is little evidence of how it’s impacting on regional businesses and regional towns. That’s why we are conducting the electricity survey.”

“Our target is 200 businesses in each of four council areas in regional Queensland.”

“We are seeking responses from all types of businesses from those involved in agriculture (including farmers), tourism and mining, through to those servicing the general community such as butchers, bakers, hairdressers, accountants, health professionals, supermarkets, hotels and cafes.”

The online survey is accessed via the website www.qeun.com.au

Businesses also have the option of completing the survey over the telephone by calling 40 312 970.

“Mareeba businesses surpassed the target with 219 surveys.”

To date 76 surveys have been received from the Southern Downs, 66 from the Whitsundays and 44 from Mt Isa.

The QEUN website is updated daily with the total number of surveys received from each council area.

All individual responses to the survey are aggregated allowing a business to voice an opinion without being identified.

Almost all businesses require electricity to operate.

“In March Quarter this year, 417 small businesses were disconnected in Queensland because they couldn’t pay their power bill, a jump of 73% in just 12 weeks. Of these, 162 small businesses were disconnected by Ergon Energy (*see attached*), “she said.

Ergon Energy is now the third highest electricity retailer in Australia disconnecting small business customers due to non-payment.

Ergon Energy is 100 percent owned by the Queensland Government and supplies electricity to almost all small business and residential customers in regional Queensland. Ergon Energy is only allowed to charge its small business and residential customers the electricity prices set by the Queensland Government.

On 1st July 2017 the Queensland Government authorised another rise in electricity prices on top of the doubling of electricity prices over the past decade.

As a result regional businesses this year are experiencing another rise in their power bills of between 4.1 to 7.4 percent and households by 3.1 to 4.3 percent.

We urge all types of businesses to complete the survey by 30th September on www.qeun.com.au

For further information please contact: Jennifer Brownie, Coordinator, QEUN, ph: 40 312 865

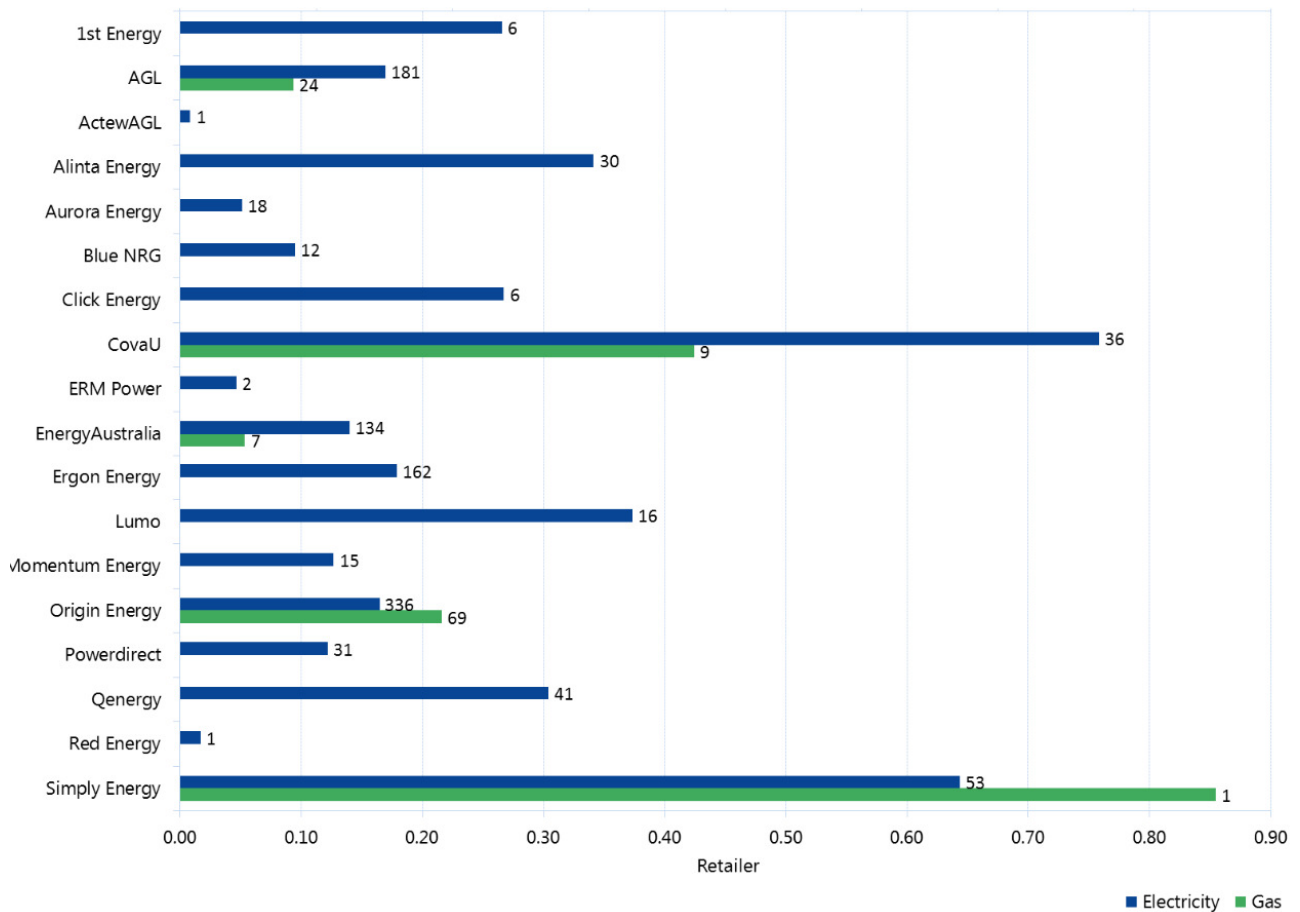
Small business customers disconnected for non-payment of electricity

The Top 5 of 18 electricity retailers disconnecting small business customers for non-payment of electricity bills in Q3 2016-17 ¹ are:

Origin Energy	336
AGL	181
Ergon Energy	162
Energy Australia	134
Simply Energy	53

1. Under the National Energy Retail Law the Australian Energy Regulator is not responsible for the reporting of retailer performance in Victoria.

2016-17 Q3 Small business customers disconnected for non- payment by retailer



Source: Australian Energy Regulator, last updated 1 June 2017