



# IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

## **SURVEY REPORT MAREEBA DISTRICT**



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**DISCLAIMER**

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the Energy Consumers Australia Panel or the Australian Energy Market Commission."



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## IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND OVERVIEW

### Background

Over the period July to early October, Compass Research carried out independent surveying among businesses in four representative Queensland regions on behalf of Queensland Electricity Users Network with support from Energy Consumers Australia.

The following gives an overview of the results.

Full detailed reports for the four areas overall and for each region can be viewed on the QEUN website [www.qeun.com.au](http://www.qeun.com.au)

### The Four Regions Surveyed

The four rural regions selected - Mareeba (northern agricultural, especially irrigated), Southern Downs (southern agricultural), Whitsundays (tourism) and Mt Isa (mining), are representative of the diversity of regional Queensland outside of the main regional cities.

This diversity was also represented, at the time of the surveying, in a range of economic conditions - good growth based on agricultural expansion in Mareeba, slow conditions in the Southern Downs, Mt Isa doing it tough with the collapse of the mining boom and Whitsundays struggling to recover from the effects of Cyclone Debbie. However, while there was some variation, the main results were remarkably similar.

The four regions represented a population of 109,000.

The survey sample was large at 741 and covered all industry sectors.

### The Rising Costs

Almost all relied on Ergon, the Queensland government owned monopoly supplier in regional Queensland, and have faced major increases of the order of 15 – 20% in the last few years on top of large rises over the preceding period.

Electricity costs of the businesses responding as a proportion of their total costs ranged from less than 5% to more than 30% with an average of 13%.

### How did Businesses Adjust?

The overwhelming response (70%) was that the businesses had suffered a loss in profitability. Only 22% said they were able or willing to pass on the cost to customers – very few in full.

Some two-thirds tried to reduce electricity consumption by modifying behaviour (eg. adjusting air-conditioners) and 42% by installing more efficient equipment.

Some 15% invested in alternative energy generation.

Resulting losses in jobs or staff hours were recorded by 15%.

Some 25% said they increased debt carried by their businesses.

### **What Will Happen if Electricity Costs Continue to Rise?**

Some 22% of respondents indicated they were now extremely concerned about their ability to pay their electricity bills – that they were experiencing bill stress.

If electricity prices go up again, some 52% said they would experience strong to severe stress in their business. Some 30% said they would consider reducing staff/staff hours – a leap from the 15% who have already cut back.

Conversely if prices went down, 86% said it would increase the viability of their businesses and 35% said they would consider employing more staff.

### **Impact on the Regional Economy**

Almost all said that the rises in electricity prices were adversely affecting their regional economies; some 34% recording it was severely affecting their economies.

### **Conclusions**

Thus, the electricity price increases have led to some price rises to customers. They have led to direct reductions in employment.

Businesses have tried to cope by modifying electricity consumption behaviour, installing more efficient equipment and in some cases, turning to alternative energy sources.

But the main result has been that business' profitability and incomes have suffered. Many are now reporting "bill stress" and a quarter have survived by taking on more debt.

While job and employee work hour losses have so far not been large, the squeeze on profitability will have meant a lesser ability to pay staff higher wages.

If price rises continue, loss of employment can be expected to increase.

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## SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

### Introduction

- A survey of businesses was carried out in the Mareeba district in Far North Queensland as part of a program of surveying in four Queensland regional districts to ascertain the reactions of businesses in regional Queensland to rising electricity prices,

### Characteristics

- The sample of 219 was representative of industry classifications as per data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), but tended to be low compared with ABS data in micro businesses with no employees apart from owners.
- Some 94% of respondents were locally owned and about 60% owned their own premises.

### Electricity Delivered to Businesses

- Virtually all were Ergon customers but 26% had an element of their own generation.
- Of the 69% of respondents who could answer the question about electricity costs as a proportion of total business costs, 38% said less than 5%, some 22% said over 20%. Average recorded was 14.2%.

### Decisions to Accommodate Electricity Price Rises

- About a quarter indicated they didn't know about the electricity price rises in July in 2016 and 2017.
- However, 92% said their electricity costs had risen with only 4% saying they hadn't.
- While about 70% said their electricity consumption had stayed about the same, some 20% said it had risen against 9% who said it had fallen. The indications are that on balance, consumption has risen marginally.
- The key question in the survey was, "Which of the following decisions have you made to enable your business to accommodate rising electricity costs over the past 12 months?" The following responses were received.

Have you:	No.	% of Respondents (219)
Accepted lower profits (income) from the business	138	63%
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	135	62%
Reduced electricity consumption through investment in more energy efficient appliances & equipment, eg. air-conditioners, fridges/freezers, cold rooms, irrigation pumps, lighting, etc.	104	47%
Increased the debt carried by the business	80	37%
Passed the increased cost of electricity on to your customers through higher prices for your products/services	58	26%
Invested in alternative electricity generation	48	22%
Reduced staff hours or staff numbers	31	14%
Other	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>273%</b>

- Many gave more than one response resulting in an average of 2.3 per respondent.
- The indications are that as a result of increased electricity costs, almost two-thirds of businesses have become less profitable. (Note: The survey does not include businesses that may have gone out of business.)
- Over 60% have tried to reduce consumption by modifying behaviour.
- Almost 50% had invested in more energy efficient equipment.
- Over a third indicated they had increased the debt carried by the business. (Cross tabulations indicated this was mainly due to reduced profits, not investment in equipment.)
- Only 26% had passed the increase on to customers – many saying only partially (only 5% in full). Most of those who didn't, said they couldn't (eg. farmers, miners, etc.). For others, they didn't because they felt the market for their services wouldn't stand an increase, others because of competition. Average increase was 4.9% of those reporting. The indications are that overall price increases for the whole sample was of the order of 1%.
- About 20% said they had invested in alternative electricity generation most in solar, but some larger businesses in diesel.
- Some 14% said they had reduced staff hours with average loss calculating at 3.3 hours a week across the whole sample. Actual job losses recorded were 29, ie. about 1% of the recorded workforce of the businesses surveyed.
- Businesses with employment 5 – 19 and those with electricity costs 21% – 30% of total, were more likely to have reduced staff hours and accept higher debt.
- Those with electricity 30% or more of total costs were more likely to change electricity consumption behaviour, invest in saving devices and accept lower profits.

### **Satisfaction with Electricity Prices and Reliability**

- Some 64% recorded they were very dissatisfied with electricity prices being charged to their business. On a scale of 1 to 10, only 5% gave a score of over 5 and average rating was only 1.5.
- On the other hand, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being very satisfied, average rating of reliability of supply was 7.6.

### **Impacts if Costs of Electricity Increased Further or Reduced**

- If electricity prices increased further:
  - Almost 50% of respondents indicated they would experience strong to severe stress;
  - Almost a half said they would consider investing in solar and 13% in diesel but only 1% in battery storage;
  - Some 35% said they would consider reducing staff (cf 14% who had already reduced staff).

- If prices decreased, some 80% said the viability of their business would increase, 40% would consider upgrading machinery and equipment necessary for their business and 37% said they would consider employing more staff.

### **Impact on Regional Economy**

- Respondents indicated they believed the electricity price rises were severely impacting the regional economy. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being severely impacted by rising electricity costs, only 3% gave a score of less than 5, a third severely impacted and average score was 8.3.
- Business types in communities especially affected by higher electricity costs were widely spread but led by responses “farmers” and “all”.

### **Supplementary Information**

- Number of bills (ie. connections) per business averaged 2.6.
- Over 40% did not respond to a question of what tariff they were on indicating that they may not have known.
- Some 37% indicated their bills included a portion of home consumption.
- Median electricity bill was in the range \$10 - \$15,000. Average was \$71,000 but excluding one very large user, \$34,000.

### **General Comments**

- General comments were varied but led by “impacting business viability”, “issues relating to Ergon” and “affecting the economy”, especially irrigation costs.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General

Compass Research (see background, [Appendix 1](#)), was asked by the Queensland Electricity Users Network (QEUN) with financial support from Energy Consumers Australia to carry out a survey of a sample of businesses in regional Queensland to ascertain the impact of rising electricity prices on businesses and the economy of regional Queensland.

Businesses in four local centres' districts in regional Queensland were targeted:

Mareeba – a regional centre in the far north of the State with an economy mainly based on irrigated agricultural industries.

Southern Downs – a regional centre in southern Queensland based on the towns of Warwick and Stanthorpe with an economy mainly based on agriculture.

Airlie Beach/Whitsundays – a regional centre in the central north of the State with an economy mainly based on tourism.

Mt Isa – a regional centre in the far west of the State with an economy mainly based on mining.

Surveying was commenced in July 2017 and continued through to early October 2017. Surveying was commenced in order of Mareeba, Stanthorpe, Airlie Beach, Mt Isa. This report analyses the results from surveying in the Mareeba district.

### 1.2 Survey Methodology

A set questionnaire was developed as given in [Appendix 2](#).

Lists of business contacts were obtained from a number of sources including the local Mareeba telephone book and on-line directories.

Mareeba Chamber of Commerce, Mareeba District Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and Tablelands Canegrowers sent out questionnaires to their members. Based on email addresses in the local telephone directory, some additional businesses were emailed.

This was followed up by contact by trained interviewers by telephone of identified business numbers in the Mareeba district to offer to complete the questionnaire over the telephone or where arranged to email a copy of the questionnaire.

This process was accompanied by media coverage advising of the survey and encouraging businesses to respond.

### 1.3 Timing

For Mareeba businesses, the survey was carried out commencing July and continued during August and early September 2017.

## 2.0 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

### 2.1 Number of Responses

A total of 200 responses were targeted and a total of 219 received before cut off.

### 2.2 Industry Classifications

Responses were allocated into Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard industrial classifications.

The following compares the responses received by industry classification with the Australian Bureau of Statistics data on the number of businesses registered by industry classification in the Mareeba Shire area.

**Table #1: Q12 - Responses by Industry Sample Compared with ABS Data on Number of Registered Businesses**

	No.	Survey	ABS	Difference
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	72	33%	30%	+3%
Mining	1	0%	2%	(-2%)
Manufacturing	7	3%	4%	(-1%)
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste services	3	1%	0%	+1%
Construction	23	11%	15%	(-4%)
Retail trade	21	10%	8%	+2%
Accommodation & Food services	24	11%	4%	+7%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	3	1%	5%	(-4%)
Information, Media & Telecommunications	3	1%	0%	+1%
Financial & Insurance services	0	0%	4%	(-4%)
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate services	5	2%	10%	+8%
Professional, Scientific & Technical services	6	3%	5%	(-2%)
Administrative & Support services	8	4%	3%	+1%
Public Administration & Safety	0	0%	0%	0
Education & Training	3	1%	1%	0
Health Care & Social Assistance	9	4%	2%	+2%
Arts & Recreation services	4	2%	1%	+1%
Other Services	22	10%	4%	+6%
Currently unknown	0	0%	1%	(-1%)
Not stated	5	2%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

By and large, the sample is indicated to be generally representative of the spread of businesses by industry in the area. There is some over representation of Accommodation and Food services and Rental and Hiring in the sample and under representation of Transport. There was some difficulty in allocating "Other services" responses that explains over representation of this industry classification.

### 2.3 Size of Business, Employment and Turnover

The following gives size of businesses by employment.

**Table #2: Q14 - Size of Businesses by Employment**

<b>Business Employees</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
0	11	5%
1	13	6%
1.5	1	0%
1.6	1	0%
2	27	12%
3	23	11%
4	16	7%
5	19	9%
6	11	5%
7	8	4%
8	8	4%
9	10	5%
10	6	3%
11	6	3%
12	8	4%
13	4	2%
14	4	2%
15	1	0%
16	3	1%
18	4	2%
19	1	0%
21	1	0%
22	1	0%
23	1	0%
24	1	0%
25	3	1%
26	2	1%
27	2	1%
29	1	0%
30	2	1%
33	3	1%
35	1	0%
40	1	0%
41	1	0%
43	1	0%
46	1	0%
50	1	0%
57	1	0%
60	1	0%
70	1	0%
75	1	0%
76	1	0%
79	1	0%
100	1	0%
105	1	0%
170	1	0%
175	1	0%
420	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Average per business was 15.2.

Total number of employees recorded was 3159 compared with ABS Census 2011 for Mareeba Shire of 8139 including government and non-business. The indications are the survey picked up a large proportion of business employment in the Mareeba area.

This distribution compares with ABS data on registered businesses by employment as follows.

**Table #3: Survey & ABS Registered Businesses by Employment Compared, Mareeba Shire**

<b>Business Employees</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>ABS</b>
1 – 4	37%	25%
5 – 19	47%	12%
20+	16%	3%
0	0	60%
Not stated	5%	

While there appears to be a large difference, the survey counted owners as employees, the ABS statistics do not. Also many of those who are registered as having no employees are single tradesmen who do not advertise and list themselves as businesses.

However, even taking these factors into account, the results indicate that the survey sample tended to record a higher proportion from medium and larger businesses in a regional context as opposed to “micro” businesses.

The following table gives survey results.

**Table #4: Q17 - Survey Results by Turnover**

<b>\$ '000</b>	<b>Survey</b>
<\$500	44%
\$500 – \$1 million	26%
\$1 million – \$5 million	21%
Over \$5 million	5%
Not stated	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

This compares with ABS data for registered businesses.

**Table #5: ABS Registered Businesses by Turnover, Mareeba Shire**

<b>Turnover</b>	<b>ABS</b>
\$0 - \$50,000	25%
\$50,000 – \$100,000	16%
\$100,000 – \$200,000	17%
\$200,000 - \$500,000	20%
\$500,000 - \$2 million	17%
\$2 million & more	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Once again, the registered businesses are likely to include a very substantial number of single tradesmen who do not advertise themselves and operate as businesses. However, even taking into account this factor, the results tend to confirm that the survey responses were probably from a higher proportion of medium and larger businesses.

## 2.4 Locally Owned or Branch Office

Survey responses were dominantly from locally owned businesses.

**Table #6: Q15 - Locally Owned or Branch Office**

	No.	%
Locally owned	205	94%
Branch office	5	2%
No response	9	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 2.5 Rent or Lease Premises

The majority of responding businesses owned their premises.

**Table #7: Q16 - Rent or Own Premises**

	No.	%
Rent	86	39%
Owned	125	57%
No response	8	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 3.0 HOW ELECTRICITY DELIVERED TO BUSINESS

### 3.1 How Receive Electricity Bills

Almost all received electricity supply bills from Ergon.

**Table #8: QB - Electricity Supply**

	No.	%
Ergon	216	99%
Ergon Other	1	0%
Landlord	1	0%
Other	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Virtually all were Ergon customers.

### 3.2 Own Generation

However, some 28% supplemented Ergon supply by generating their own electricity.

**Table #9: QC - Generate Own Electricity**

	No.	%
Yes	61	28%
No	153	70%
No response	5	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

All businesses were connected to the grid.

### 3.3 Proportion Electricity of Business Costs

Some 140 responded.

**Table #10: Q6 - Percent Electricity Costs of Total Business Costs**

<u>% of Business Costs</u>	Of those Responding	
	No.	%
1% – 5%	53	38%
6% – 10%	25	18%
11% – 20%	32	23%
21% – 30%	18	13%
30%+	12	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Some 38% recorded 5% or lower. Apart from that, the next biggest group (23%), were 11% – 20%.

Average proportion recorded was 14.2%.



## 4.0 AWARENESS OF ELECTRICITY COST RISES

### 4.1 Rises in 2016

**Table #11: Q4a - “Are you aware that electricity charges for regional Queensland businesses increased on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 by a further 11.2% to 15.8%?”**

	No.	%
Yes	155	71%
No	62	28%
Not sure/don't know	1	0%
No response	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Over a quarter recorded they didn't know.

### 4.2 Rises in 2017

**Table #12: Q4b - “Are you aware that electricity charges for regional Queensland businesses increased on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017?”**

	No.	%
Yes	161	74%
No	51	23%
Not sure/don't know	1	0%
No response	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Under a quarter recorded they didn't know.

## 5.0 DECISIONS TO ACCOMMODATE ELECTRICITY PRICE RISES

### 5.1 Electricity Costs Risen

**Table #13: Q1 - "Has cost of electricity for your business risen in the last 12 months?"**

	No.	%
Yes	201	92%
No	8	4%
Not sure/don't know	6	3%
No response	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Only a few businesses recorded that their electricity costs had not risen.

### 5.2 Consumption of Electricity

**Table #14: Q2 - "Has the consumption of electricity by your business changed over the last 12 months?"**

	No.	%
Fallen	20	9%
Stayed about the same	151	69%
Risen	44	20%
Not sure/don't know	2	1%
No response	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Dominant response was "Stayed about the same" but 20% "Risen" was more than 9% "Fallen". The indication is that on balance, electricity consumption has probably risen marginally.

### 5.3 Decisions Made to Enable Business to Accommodate Electricity Cost Rises

**Table #15: Q5 - "Which of the following decisions have you made to enable your business to accommodate rising electricity costs over the past 12 months?"**

<b>Have you:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Accepted lower profits from the business	138	63%
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	135	62%
Reduced electricity consumption through investment in more energy efficient appliances & equipment, eg. air-conditioners, fridges/freezers, cold rooms, irrigation pumps, lighting, etc.	104	47%
Increased the debt carried by the business	80	37%
Passed the increased cost of electricity on to your customers through higher prices for your products/services	58	26%
Invested in alternative electricity generation	48	22%
Reduced staff hours or staff numbers	31	14%
Other	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>273%</b>

The first conclusion to be drawn from this table is that businesses have responded by taking multiple actions – an average of 2.3.

The most prevalent response has been a passive one of accepting lower profits with 63% reporting this as a consequence. Just behind that, was 62% reporting they tried to reduce consumption by modifying behaviour (by doing things like running the air conditioners at marginally higher temperatures).

The next most prevalent action, 47% of respondents, was to invest in appliances that used electricity more efficiently, eg. lighting, air conditioners, etc.

(Note: However it should be noted that in response to Question 2, there was no widespread indication of a major decrease in consumption with only 9% recording that their electricity consumption had fallen and most recording that it was much the same. A conclusion can be drawn that if those actions to reduce consumption as a result of higher costs had not been taken, electricity consumption would have grown more strongly)

The next highest response, 37% of respondents, recorded increased debt. Presumably this could be because of reduced profitability or investment in electricity saving or other generation. Cross tabulation with other responses indicated that increased debt was largely associated with responses indicating acceptance of lower profits but also correlated with staff reduction.

Analysis of cross tabulation by proportion of electricity costs of total business costs (see Appendix 3), indicated that proportion of those saying increased debt tended to be higher among those with higher proportion of electricity costs of total business costs, as might be expected.

Some 58 or 26% of respondents (ie. about a quarter), responded by increasing prices to customers. Of these, 10 or 5% of the sample passed their costs on fully and 46 or 21% of the sample passed on the costs in part. Respondents passing on costs were asked to estimate the resulting increase in prices and responded as follows.

**Table #16: Q5a2 - Resulting Percent Increase in Prices to Customers**

<b>Percent Increase</b>	<b>No.</b>
1%	4
2%	8
3%	6
4.2%	1
5%	9
10%	5
12%	1
15%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

Average increase was 4.9% of those responding. Assuming those who passed on costs who did not answer this question had a similar profile to those who did, total increase in prices by total sample respondents would be of the order of 1.0%.

Respondents were asked why they didn't pass on increased costs (Q5a3). Appendix 7 gives responses.

Agricultural businesses and mining businesses indicated that they couldn't. They were price takers.

Otherwise, there were two major themes:

- a) Competition didn't allow them to increase;
- b) The market for their product/service wouldn't stand higher prices.

There were also a few "non-profit" organisations dependent on donations/fundraising.

Some 48 or 22% indicated they responded by installing alternative energy generation with the following details given.

**Table #17: Q5b - Alternative Energy Generation Installed Since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016**

<b>% Increase</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>
Roof top solar panels	35	16%
Solar hot water	2	1%
Batteries	1	0
Diesel/petrol generators	8	3%
Solar lights throughout	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	

The major response was to install solar generation in one form or another with 8 saying diesel/petrol generators. However, examination of results by type and size of business indicates that some of this diesel generation is likely to be large.

Some 31 (14%) said that they compensated by reducing staff/staff hours as follows.

**Table #18: Q5c – "Approximately how many staff hours per week have been reduced to accommodate rising electricity bills?"**

<b>Hours Lost</b>	<b>No. Responding</b>	<b>% of Total Sample</b>	<b>Total Hours Reduced</b>
2	1	0%	2
3	1	0%	3
5	4	2%	20
6	1	0%	6
8	3	1%	24
10	4	2%	40
12	1	0%	12
15	2	1%	30
18	1	0%	18
20	1	0%	20
30	1	0%	30
35	2	1%	70
40	5	2%	200
49	1	0%	49
50	1	0%	50
60	1	0%	60
105	1	0%	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>739</b>

(Note: It should be noted that this is likely to understate losses in employment in recent years as the sample would not include businesses that had gone out of business with rising electricity costs being a factor.)

The total hours lost recorded was 739, ie. average 24 per business reducing hours and an average of 3.3 hours over the whole sample.

Of the hours lost, 17 recorded job losses as follows.

**Table #19: Q5e - Loss of Jobs**

<b>No. of Jobs</b>	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>
1	6	5
2	2	2
3	1	1
4	0	1

This calculates to total jobs lost at 29 (Full time 13, Part time 16).

This compares with total jobs recorded by respondents of 3159, ie. about 1%.

Other responses recorded were as follows.

**Table #20: Other Responses**

	<b>No.</b>
We will be moving into a smaller location to try and limit increases in power costs	1
We will have to increase our visitors site fees to cover the costs	1
We cannot pass our cost onto customers as our business is horticulture, we cannot change staff hours	1
We already feel our electricity consumption is used wisely and that we cannot reduce our consumption	1
Recently I put our electricity account out to tender, and changed to a company with better prising	1
We use small diesel engines to run things where practical rather than electricity. Where is the carbon sense in this?	1

Analysis of responses by size of business and proportion electricity costs of total business costs (see [Appendix 4](#)) indicated that for most questions, there were no significant differences with the following exceptions.

The indications are that the larger 20+ staff businesses were less likely to reduce staff/staff hours but medium size 5 – 19 more likely.

Those with electricity costs more than 30% of total business costs were less likely to curtail staff/staff hours but those in the 21% - 30% range more likely.

Those with more than 30% electricity costs were more likely to change electricity consumption behaviour to try to reduce consumption along with investment in electricity saving devices, to accept lower profits and, with those in the 21 – 30% electricity costs of total costs, accept higher debt.

## 6.0 SATISFACTION WITH SITUATION

### 6.1 Prices

**Table #21: 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?”**

Rating	No.	%
1 Very dissatisfied	140	64%
2	19	9%
3	16	7%
4	11	5%
5	18	8%
6	5	2%
7	3	1%
8	2	1%
10 Very satisfied	2	1%
No response	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

The response indicates a high level of dissatisfaction with 64% rating at the lowest level of 1 very dissatisfied and only 5% giving a score of over 5. Average rating was very low at 1.5.

### 6.2 Reliability

On the other hand, only a few gave a satisfaction rating of less than 5 for reliability.

**Table #22A: 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?”**

Rating	No.	%
1 Very dissatisfied	5	2%
2	5	2%
3	4	2%
4	5	2%
5	27	12%
6	18	8%
7	21	10%
8	64	29%
9	45	21%
10 Very satisfied	20	9%
No response	5	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Average rating was 7.6.



### 6.3 Concerns About Paying Electricity Bills

**Table #22B: Q3 - “On a scale of 1 to 10, how concerned are you about the ability of your business to pay electricity bills and on time with 1 being not concerned and 10 being extremely concerned?”**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
1 Not concerned	31	14%
2	2	1%
3	6	3%
4	11	5%
5	19	9%
6	21	10%
7	22	10%
8	33	15%
9	14	6%
10 Extremely concerned	59	27%
No response	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Responses varied but 48% ranked 8 – 10 and average was 6.6.

## 7.0 IMPACTS IF COSTS OF ELECTRICITY REDUCED OR INCREASED

### 7.1 Financial Stress if Electricity Costs Increased

**Table #23: 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 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, with 1 being no stress and 10 being severe stress?”**

Rating	No.	%
1 No stress	10	5%
2	5	2%
3	9	4%
4	6	3%
5	29	13%
6	17	8%
7	30	14%
8	44	20%
9	22	10%
10 Severe stress	41	19%
No response	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Almost 50% responded with a rating of 8 to 10, ie. recording very strong levels of financial stress if costs increase. Average was 7.0 with almost 30% of respondents giving a rating of 9 or 10 implying a severe stress.

### 7.2 If Cost of Electricity Reduced

**Table #24: Q10a - “If the cost of electricity was reduced, which of the following would apply to your business?”**

	No.	% of Sample
The viability of my business would improve	176	80%
I would consider employing more staff and/or increase staff hours	82	37%
I would consider upgrading equipment & machinery necessary for my business	88	40%
I would consider expanding my business	66	30%

Some 80% said it would improve viability of their business. About 40% said they would consider employing more staff and consider upgrading equipment and machinery necessary for their business.

### 7.3 If Cost of Electricity Increases

**Table #25: Q10b - “If the cost of electricity increases, please select which of the following would apply to your business?”**

	No.	% of Sample
I would consider investing in solar generation	107	49%
I would consider investing in diesel generation	29	13%
I would consider investing in battery storage	39	18%
I would consider reducing staff hours	66	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	

There were a few multiple responses. The leading response would be to invest in solar (almost 50%). Some 30% indicated they would consider reducing staff/hours.

(Note: This percentage is much higher than the numbers recording past reductions in staff hours (13%) and tends to indicate that further rises are likely to result in much higher rates of impacts on employment.)

## 8.0 IMPACT ON REGION

### 8.1 Regional Impact

Table #26: 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?"

Rating	No.	%
1 Not impacted	1	0%
3	2	1%
4	4	2%
5	13	6%
6	12	5%
7	25	11%
8	38	17%
9	40	18%
10 Severely impacted	72	33%
No response	12	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

Only 3% recorded an impact of less than 5.

A third recorded severely impacted. Average rating was 8.3 indicating a very high impact on the economy of the Mareeba community.

## 8.2 Business Types in Community Especially Affected

Respondents were asked, “Can you name any businesses (or types) in your community that are especially affected by rising electricity costs?”

Appendix 5 gives responses. The following table seeks to group and summarise.

**Table #27: Q11 - Summary of business Types Especially Affected**

		No.	Total
<b>Agriculture Farming</b>			<b>79</b>
	General	59	
	Esp irrigation/cane	18	
	Dairying	1	
	chickens	1	
<b>All</b>			<b>44</b>
	General	32	
	Small business	12	
<b>Retail/Shops</b>			<b>16</b>
	General	7	
	Fish shops	1	
	Supermarket	4	
	Butcher shops	1	
	Bakeries	2	
	Ice creamery	1	
<b>Food &amp; Beverages</b>			<b>14</b>
	Food outlets/Cafes/Restaurants	8	
	Hotels/Hospitality/Tourism	6	
<b>Manufacturing</b>			<b>11</b>
	General	3	
	Engineering metal fabrication	5	
	Motor mechanics/Panel beating	2	
	Plumbing	1	
<b>Other</b>			<b>12</b>
	Cold stores/Packing sheds	4	
	Aquaculture	3	
	Any air conditioned	2	
	Landlords	2	
	Mining	1	

The Mareeba area has a great deal of irrigation agriculture and out of 176 mentions, 45% related to agriculture.

There was a strong group that specified “All”, especially small businesses.

Outside those, leading mentions related to retail and food and beverage outlets.

Manufacturing and “Others” mentions were significant.

## 9.0 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ABOUT ELECTRICITY BILLS

### 9.1 Number of Connections

One Ergon customer can have a number of different connections and receive more than one account. The following question aimed at obtaining information about the number of different electricity bills businesses were receiving indicating the number of connections.

**Table #28: Q18 - “How many electricity bills for different accounts do you receive for your business monthly or quarterly?”**

No. of bills	Number of Responses			Total Bills
	Monthly	Quarterly	Total	
1	58	46	104	104
2	11	15	26	52
3	4	19	23	69
4	3	10	13	52
5	1	2	3	15
6	2	7	9	54
7	2	5	7	49
8	-	1	1	8
9	1	1	2	18
10	1	4	5	50
12	1	-	1	12
14	1	-	1	14
20	-	1	1	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>506</b>

The indications are that businesses receive an average of 2.6 bills per business.

### 9.2 Tariffs

Some 99 (45%) did not respond, indicating they may not have known the tariff they were on. Tariffs recorded were as follows.

**Table #29: Q19 - “What are the tariffs listed on your electricity bills?”**

Tariff	No.	%
11	48	21%
20	52	23%
20 (large)	11	5%
21	8	4%
22 (small)	9	4%
22 (large)	13	6%
22 (A)	2	1%
37	6	3%
44	6	3%
45	-	-
46	-	-
47	-	-
48	1	0%
62	34	15%
65	1	0%
66	20	9%
Other	15	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100%</b>

The figures indicate a substantial number with different tariffs.

Of the “Other”, one said Tariff 31.

A significant number (21%) recorded Tariff 11. Largest numbers were on Tariff 20 (28%), followed by Tariffs 62 and 66.

### 9.3 Inclusion of Home

Some 82 (37%) indicated that their business bills included a portion of home consumption.

### 9.4 Annual Power Bills

Some 191 respondents recorded their annual power bills. [Appendix 6](#) sets out detailed responses.

The following table summarises.

**Table #30: Q21 - Summary of annual Power Bills**

	No.	%
\$0 - \$2,500	40	21%
Over \$2,500 to \$6,000	26	14%
Over \$6,000 to \$10,000	23	12%
Over \$10,000 to \$20,000	33	17%
Over \$20,000 to \$50,000	38	20%
Over \$50,000 to \$100,000	15	8%
Over \$100,000 to \$500,000	14	7%
Over \$500,000	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100%</b>

Almost a half (47%), were \$10,000 or less and median in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range..

However, average was \$71,000 including one very large user. Excluding that very large user, average was \$34,000.



## 10.0 GENERAL COMMENTS

Some 45 general comments were recorded in [Appendix 8](#).

The following table seeks to group and summarise.

**Table #31: Summary of General Comments**

		No.	Total
<b>Impacting Business Viability</b>	Can't afford wage from business	1	10
	May have to close	6	
	Can't pass on costs/esp primary producers	3	
<b>Ergon Issues</b>	Remote area read own meter but get meter service charge	1	8
	Efficiency	1	
	Put small business on Board	1	
	Profligate spending	1	
	Obscene profits – government to blame	1	
	Confusion over many different charges	1	
	Lower solar bonus	1	
	Remove new service fee and meter service fees	1	
<b>Affecting Economy/Demand</b>	Non-profit donations	1	6
	Taking money out of community	1	
	Client spending	2	
	Affecting costs of materials for construction / other	2	
<b>Irrigation Cost Impacts</b>	Hurting	1	4
	Have to drop some traditional crops	1	
	Affecting productivity	2	
<b>Problem with Solar</b>	Problem – solar doesn't allow to operate at night	2	4
	Switching to diesel pumps	1	
	Tree cover limits	1	
<b>Rising costs offsetting saving</b>	Cut power but cost rising	2	2
<b>Catering for Greens</b>	At expense of business	2	2
<b>Low socio economic impacts</b>	Impacts on low socio economic	1	1
<b>Other</b>	Vital aeration in aquaculture	1	7
	Sell the assets	1	
	Keep coal/Coal station in north	2	
	Too much political b/s	1	
	Investing in solar	1	
	Use a lot of large freezers and fridges	1	

The largest grouping related to impacts on viability of businesses (10) and a range of issues relating to Ergon operations including efficiency and high profits (8).

Effects on the economy and demand for services and effects on material costs were raised (6).

Special problems for irrigators were raised (4), along with problems with solar (4).

There was a range of other matters raised.

# **SURVEY REPORT MAREEBA DISTRICT**

## **Appendices**

## About Compass Research

Compass Research is a professional market research firm that has been carrying out market and community research in regional Queensland and across northern Australia over a 30-year period.

Clients over the years have included numerous businesses, local government, regional organisations, airports, universities and government departments.

Research carried out has included numerous quantitative surveys (telephone, online, intercept (interviewing), intercept (written questionnaires) and qualitative surveys in the form of focus groups, and in-depth interviewing. The firm has been especially strong in quantitative surveying (including longitudinal) among households, businesses, at airports and in indigenous communities in regional areas.

Most recent ongoing work has been:

- To provide community feedback over 10 years to Queensland Health, James Cook University and more recently Monash University to help guide the development of the Eliminate Dengue program.
- To provide intercept surveying responses at two airports on departing passenger movements and reactions.
- To assist Cairns Regional Council with its community responses and guidance surveys.
- To assist research into responses to the government's primary health initiative.

The firm carried out a special survey of electricity among households and businesses in the Cape Tribulation area to determine how they coped with not being on the electricity grid.

As the market research arm of Cummings Economics, one of the most experienced professional economic research firms in regional Australia, Compass Research has the benefit of being able to formulate and assess results of market research among businesses, against a background of in-depth knowledge of business and industry structures and trends in regional Australia, especially Queensland and northern Australia.

Compass Research has a highly experienced team in survey design, questionnaire development, telephone and intercept interviewing, data entry and analysis.

Further information is available on [www.compassresearch.net.au](http://www.compassresearch.net.au)



## QEUN QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY USERS NETWORK

### 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.

If preferred please feel free to ring Compass Research (business hours) on 40 312 970 to complete over the telephone or you can print the survey out [here](#) and return through the mail.

#### Further information:

[Who for and why?](#)

[About Compass Research](#)

### START SURVEY

#### QA. Where does your business operate?

- ☐ 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)*

#### QB. 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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

QD. Is your business off grid?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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**Awareness**

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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.

Not concerned   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**   **8**   **9**   **10**   Extremely concerned

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 increased on **1st July 2017**?

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

---

**Own business / industry**

---

**Q5.** Which of the following **decisions** have you made to enable your business to **accommodate electricity costs** over the past 12 months? Have you:

Yes	No	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Passed the increased cost of electricity onto your customers through higher prices for your products / services
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Reduced electricity consumption through investment in more energy efficient appliances and equipment, eg. air-conditioners, fridges/freezers, coldrooms, irrigation pumps, lighting etc.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Invested in alternative electricity generation
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Reduced staff hours or staff numbers
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Accepted lower profits from the business
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Increased the debt carried by the business
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: <input type="text"/>

**Q5a1.** Did you pass part or the full cost of rising electricity costs onto your customers?

☐ Partial

☐ Full

**Q5a2.** What was the resulting percentage increase in prices to your customers?

*Your best estimate is better than no response.*

% ☐ Don't know

**Q5a3.** Why didn't you pass the increased cost of electricity onto your customers?

**Q5b.** 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:

**Q5c.** Approximately how many staff **hours** per week have been reduced to accommodate rising electricity bills?

hrs per week

**Q5d.** Has the reduction in staff hours resulted in the loss of any full or part time jobs?

☐ Yes

☐ No



Q5e. 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.*

% ☐ 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?

Very dissatisfied ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 Very satisfied

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?

Very dissatisfied ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 Very satisfied

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?

No stress ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 Severe stress

Q10a. If the cost of electricity was **reduced**, 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**, 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

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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	<input type="text"/>
Part time	<input type="text"/>
Casual	<input type="text"/>

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

<input type="radio"/>	Locally owned
<input type="radio"/>	Branch office

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

<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No

Q17. What is the approximate annual gross turnover of your business:  
*(Annual gross turnover is the annual sales revenue)*

<input type="radio"/>	Under \$500,000
<input type="radio"/>	\$500,000 to \$1M
<input type="radio"/>	\$1M to \$5M
<input type="radio"/>	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.)

No. of accounts	
Monthly	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Quarterly	<input type="text" value="0"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure	

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 22A	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 47
<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 20	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 37	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 48
<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 20 (large)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 44	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 62
<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 21	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 45	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 65
<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 22 (small)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 46	<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 66
<input type="checkbox"/> Tariff 22 (large)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="text"/> Tariff Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure		

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know / Not sure

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

*Your best estimate is better than no response.*

\$  per year ☐ Don't know / Not sure

**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?

Not impacted ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ Severely impacted

Thank your for your time, this business survey is only for customers supplied partially or fully by grid supplied electricity. Please feel free to make comments in the box below.

Thank you for your time. We are unable to ascertain how your business pays for electricity. Please feel free to make comments in the box below.

---

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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

Business name	<input type="text"/>
Contact name	<input type="text"/>
Contact tel no.	<input type="text"/>

---

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	<input type="text"/>
-------	----------------------

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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.

**SUBMIT SURVEY**

---

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APPENDIX 3

Cross Tabulation - Responses to Higher Electricity Costs  
Acceptance of Greater Debt by Other Responses

q5a.pass increase to customers			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	102	73%	59	74%	161	74%
yes	37	27%	21	26%	58	26%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

q5b.reduced consumption.behaviour			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	51	37%	33	41%	84	38%
yes	88	63%	47	59%	135	62%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

q5c.reduced consumption.appliances			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	73	53%	42	53%	115	53%
yes	66	47%	38	48%	104	47%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

q5d.invested in alternative			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	110	79%	61	76%	171	78%
yes	29	21%	19	24%	48	22%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

q5e.reduce staff numbers hours			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	130	94%	58	73%	188	86%
yes	9	6%	22	28%	31	14%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

q5f.accepted lower profits			q5g.increase debt		Total	%
	no		yes			
	Count	%	Count	%		
no	72	52%	9	11%	81	37%
yes	67	48%	71	89%	138	63%
Total	139	100%	80	100%	219	100%

**APPENDIX 4**

**Cross Tabulation - Responses to Higher Electricity Costs by  
Business Size (staff) & Proportion Electricity Costs of Total Costs**

q5a.pass increase to customers	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	58	72%	69	74%	28	82%	6	55%	161	74%
yes	23	28%	24	26%	6	18%	5	45%	58	26%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5b.reduced consumption.behaviour	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	29	36%	34	37%	18	53%	3	27%	84	38%
yes	52	64%	59	63%	16	47%	8	73%	135	62%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5c.reduced consumption.appliances	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	44	54%	48	52%	19	56%	4	36%	115	53%
yes	37	46%	45	48%	15	44%	7	64%	104	47%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5d.invested in alternative	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	61	75%	76	82%	25	74%	9	82%	171	78%
yes	20	25%	17	18%	9	26%	2	18%	48	22%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5e.reduce staff numbers hours	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	71	88%	75	81%	31	91%	11	100%	188	86%
yes	10	12%	18	19%	3	9%		0%	31	14%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5f.accepted lower profits	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	33	41%	33	35%	9	26%	6	55%	81	37%
yes	48	59%	60	65%	25	74%	5	45%	138	63%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

q5g.increase debt	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	54	67%	57	61%	19	56%	9	82%	139	63%
yes	27	33%	36	39%	15	44%	2	18%	80	37%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%

q5h.other	q14.total									
	1. 1-4		2. 5-19		3. 20+		4. DK/No answer		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	4	5%	4	4%	1	3%		0%	9	4%
yes	1	1%	1	1%	2	6%		0%	4	2%
(blank)	76	94%	88	95%	31	91%	11	100%	206	94%
Total	81	100%	93	100%	34	100%	11	100%	219	100%



APPENDIX 4 Cont'd

**Cross Tabulation - Responses to Higher Electricity Costs by  
Business Size (staff) & Proportion Electricity Costs of Total Costs**

q5a.pass increase to customers			q6.% of business.electricity													
			1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer		Total	%
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no			37	70%	24	96%	22	69%	8	44%	10	83%	60	76%	161	74%
yes			16	30%	1	4%	10	31%	10	56%	2	17%	19	24%	58	26%
Total			53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%

q5b.reduced consumption.behaviour			q6.% of business.electricity													
			1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer		Total	%
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no			18	56%	20	38%	8	32%	29	37%	7	39%	2	17%	84	38%
yes			14	44%	33	62%	17	68%	50	63%	11	61%	10	83%	135	62%
Total			53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%

q5c.reduced consumption.appliances			q6.% of business.electricity													
			1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer		Total	%
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no			20	63%	23	43%	11	44%	46	58%	11	61%	4	33%	115	53%
yes			12	38%	30	57%	14	56%	33	42%	7	39%	8	67%	104	47%
Total			53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%

q5d.invested in alternative			q6.% of business.electricity													
			1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer		Total	%
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no			28	88%	41	77%	16	64%	62	78%	14	78%	10	83%	171	78%
yes			4	13%	12	23%	9	36%	17	22%	4	22%	2	17%	48	22%
Total			53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%



**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

q5e.reduce staff numbers hours	q6.% of business.electricity												Total	%
	1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	27	84%	46	87%	22	88%	68	86%	15	83%	10	83%	188	86%
yes	5	16%	7	13%	3	12%	11	14%	3	17%	2	17%	31	14%
Total	53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%

q5f.accepted lower profits	q6.% of business.electricity												Total	%
	1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no	10	31%	20	38%	5	20%	37	47%	6	33%	3	25%	81	37%
yes	22	69%	33	62%	20	80%	42	53%	12	67%	9	75%	138	63%
Total	53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%

q5g.increase debt	q6.% of business.electricity													Total	%
	1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer				
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
no	17	53%	36	68%	17	68%	55	70%	8	44%	6	50%	139	63%	
yes	15	47%	17	32%	8	32%	24	30%	10	56%	6	50%	80	37%	
Total	53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%	

q5h.other	q6.% of business.electricity												Total	%
	1. 1%-5%		2. 6%-10%		3. 11%-20%		4. 21%-30%		5. 31+		6. DK/No answer			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
no		0%	2	4%	3	12%	3	4%		0%	1	8%	9	4%
yes		0%	1	2%		0%	2	3%	1	6%		0%	4	2%
(blank)	32	100%	50	94%	22	88%	74	94%	17	94%	11	92%	206	94%
Total	53	100%	25	100%	32	100%	18	100%	12	100%	79	100%	219	100%



APPENDIX 5

Business Types Especially Affected

q11.name business.types affected by rising costs	No.
Agriculture	10
Agriculture especially.	1
Agriculture tourism retail	1
Agriculture, food manufacture	1
Agriculture.cold stores	1
All	5
All 100	1
All agricultural operations that rely on irrigation the majority of which rely on electricity	1
All Agricultural where all in the same boat Watering, Packing sheds etc	1
All agricultural business	1
All business, there is no competition	1
All businesses	2
All businesses are affected some more than others I run a business and costs are not a large % but in Farming business it is a prohibitive cost of operation.	1
All businesses in the community, agricultural is the worse as we cannot pass on the increased costs.	1
All businesses that use electricity	1
All farmers who need to pump water to produce fruit/veg.	1
All farming and small business	1
All food outlets, supermarkets and anybody that uses fridges and freezers	1
All irrigation agricultural properties who rely heavily on electricity for pumping water crops	1
All locally owned small businesses will be affected.	1
All of them	2
All of us	1
All of us, farmers and family owned businesses	1
All of us farmers	1
All primary producers who use electricity to pump water for irrigation.	1
All small businesses like me and agriculture	1
All the farmers	2
All the farmers in the area are affected as we water using pivots all year round, without water no crop, no crop no money. all stuck in a hard place. need a lot of battery storage and solar to generate power to run pivots, yet another expense.	1
All types of Businesses	1
Any agricultural business that relies on electricity for irrigation, cold rooms etc.	1
Any agricultural farming business that has to irrigate with electric pumps.	1
Any business that uses electricity for irrigating.	1
Any business that is running refrigeration and aircon.	1
Any farmer	1
Any that require airconditioned premises for staff and customers	1
Aquaculture	1
Aquaculture farmers	1
Business and Farmers	1
Butcher shops - expensive to run cold rooms.	1
Cafe and restaurant	1

Cafes and restaurants that utilise a lot of refrigeration in tropical climate	1
Cafe's takeaways	1
Cane farmers. Fabrication and manufacturing.	1
Cane farming irrigation cost	1
Chicken Broiler Industry	2
Due to the extreme temperatures in FNQ we rely heavily on air conditioning or we cannot run our business. We are therefore affected hugely by the electricity rises.	1
Engineering works, irrigators using electric motors	1
Every business	1
Every business . we have no competition but business have lots	1
Every small business will be affected, we are a small community and we do not have the population that if we raise our prices it won't matter, The small businesses are the people of the town, so it will be a rolling effect. Disaster for businesses who are just making a living!!!	1
Everybody	1
Everyone	3
Everyone especially farmers	1
Everyone I am sure	1
Everyone in small business	1
Factories/shops/farmers - we are all struggling with higher costs	1
Family supermarket	1
Farmer. especially	1
Farmers	7
Farmers bakers	1
Farmers food industries	1
Farmers and food company	1
Farmers and small family businesses	1
Farmers cool rooms	1
Farmers everyone is suffering local clubs	1
Farmers packers small business	1
Farmers panel beaters	1
Farmers, irrigators, dairy farmers	1
Farmers, Steel Fabricators, Metal workers	1
Farmers,,everyone	1
Farming	2
Farming , pumping water	1
Farming business support the entire community. Less disposable income from farming would impact most businesses in the area.	1
Farming businesses and small businesses	1
Farming community	1
Farming irrigators	1
Farming, Bakeries, Retail shops	1
Farming, including Relift areas from Sunwater	1
Farms	1
Fish Farmers. We have to use power to keep the fish alive and healthy or they die. We use power all night and so solar can only reduce the bill a little. To add to this Ergon split the charges to a demand and service fee and a power charge to deliberately make solar less viable. We are aware we are being ruthlessly hunted but can't see the long term sense????	1

**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

Fish shop farmers	1
Fruit farming	1
Hospitality / Restaurant / Hotels	1
I feel all businesses would be effected by rising electricity costs. The Gateway Hotel is one of our businesses that will certainly feel the price increase of electricity. The use of power is high in this premise with cold rooms, kitchen cooking equipment, backpacker use and multiple fridges and air-conditioners running.	1
Irrigated farming businesses	1
Irrigation farms	1
Irrigation uses biggest hard hit. Can you get a 75 kw solar pump or battery pack? No. But we can turn off our pumps grow less , less profit less food is so we can import food I don't know!	1
Irrigators	1
Irrigators.	1
It's hard to name but everyone I speak to in business is complaining	1
Landlords need to look into or invest into solar. And pass the reduction of costs onto the leases!!!	1
Local ice creamery. farmers	1
Local small businesses	1
Manufacturer	1
Mining	1
Motor mechanic	1
N/A	1
No	35
No but i am sure everyone is hurt by the rise	1
No but i am sure everyone is suffering. Have heard that some shop owners have to turn off their cool rooms at night because of the power is too high	1
No too remote	1
No, maybe engineering companies	1
Not person	1
Not sure	1
Only in the paper	1
Plumbing Costs, drying costs for farmers	1
Primary Producers	1
Primary Producers Horticulture Cane Growing	1
Pubs, clubs, cafes, any business using air conditioning, farming.	1
Restaurants as we run cold rooms and freezers and we are screwed as we do not have a choice in Nth Qld we only have Ergon	1
Restaurants, Cafes	1
Retail & hospitality	3
Small business	2
Small to medium enterprises	1
Sugar farms	1
Super markets family owned	1
Supermarkets, Hotels	2
Tourist, commercial	1
We are all suffering	1
(blank)	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>



APPENDIX 6

Annual Power Bills Recorded

q21.total yearly electricity usage	Count	%
\$680	1	0%
\$800	1	0%
\$1,000	2	1%
\$1,200	3	1%
\$1,400	2	1%
\$1,500	2	1%
\$1,800	2	1%
\$2,000	6	3%
\$2,060	1	0%
\$2,200	1	0%
\$2,400	2	1%
\$2,499	1	0%
\$2,500	5	2%
\$2,900	1	0%
\$3,000	10	5%
\$3,250	1	0%
\$3,500	1	0%
\$3,600	3	1%
\$4,000	5	2%
\$4,500	1	0%
\$4,800	2	1%
\$5,000	3	1%
\$5,400	1	0%
\$6,000	10	5%
\$7,000	5	2%
\$7,200	2	1%
\$7,800	1	0%
\$8,000	4	2%
\$8,400	1	0%
\$9,000	2	1%
\$10,000	8	4%
\$10,500	2	1%
\$11,000	1	0%
\$12,000	4	2%
\$13,000	1	0%
\$14,000	1	0%
\$14,400	1	0%
\$15,000	5	2%
\$16,000	3	1%
\$17,000	1	0%
\$17,500	1	0%
\$18,000	5	2%
\$20,000	8	4%

**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

\$21,000	1	0%
\$21,600	1	0%
\$22,000	1	0%
\$22,320	1	0%
\$23,000	1	0%
\$24,000	4	2%
\$25,000	4	2%
\$26,008	1	0%
\$27,000	2	1%
\$27,500	1	0%
\$29,000	1	0%
\$30,000	5	2%
\$33,000	1	0%
\$35,000	2	1%
\$36,000	2	1%
\$40,000	4	2%
\$46,000	1	0%
\$49,670	1	0%
\$50,000	3	1%
\$60,000	1	0%
\$65,000	1	0%
\$70,000	3	1%
\$72,000	1	0%
\$74,472	1	0%
\$80,000	1	0%
\$83,000	1	0%
\$85,000	1	0%
\$87,000	1	0%
\$91,000	1	0%
\$92,000	1	0%
\$100,000	2	1%
\$110,000	1	0%
\$120,000	3	1%
\$150,000	2	1%
\$155,000	1	0%
\$160,000	1	0%
\$168,000	1	0%
\$250,000	1	0%
\$300,000	1	0%
\$350,599	1	0%
\$400,000	1	0%
\$414,821	1	0%
\$1,160,000	1	0%
\$7,000,000	1	0%
(blank)	28	13%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>



APPENDIX 7

Why Not Pass on Extra Costs

q5a3.why not pass increase to customers	No.
Absorb at the moment	1
As farmers, we don't make or know what price we get for our produce until it hits markets.	1
As A business we can't afford to lose customers to constantly changing our prices and we also have to remain competitive or we won't have a business	1
As a farmer I can't increase my pricing of what I sell I get told the price.	1
As an agricultural commodity producer we are unable to pass on costs	1
As customers complain that the prices of takeaway is expensive	1
Because I am not like Ergon who has a monopoly in my area, if I owned a monopoly I would pass on the cost. I understand that if I leave Ergon I cannot return ?? How does that promote competition ??	1
Because it's not right. The cost of meats is expensive. We still want people to shop. There are other expenses not only electricity costs involved eg. Merchant fees passed by the big banks.	1
Because we will become less competitive	1
Can't	2
Can't competition	1
Can't afford to lose customers	2
Can't afford to, too much competition	1
Can't because of competition	2
Can't customers wouldn't come back	1
Can't farmers	2
Can't fixed prices	1
Can't have to take what is offered, no one to pass it onto	1
Can't non profit	1
Can't pass it on	1
Can't pass it on...wished I could	1
Can't pass on as we don't set the price	1
Can't put up prices have no customers	1
Can't we are farmers	1
Change too small	1
Competition	4
Competition in the market place wouldn't support an increase in costs	1
Competition...can manage at the moment	1
Consumers won't accept paying more because of electricity price rises alone!	1
Could lose them to competition	1
Customers won't pay higher prices	1
Do it soon	1
Don't need to	1
Don't need to at this time	1
Don't want to lose customer	1
Electricity is not a major cost, irrigate with a diesel engine	1
Farmer	1
Farmers are price takers we are not in a position to charge the increase on	1
Farmers cannot pass it on	1
Farmers have no way to pass costs on to customers	1

Farming industry does not allow for growers to pass costs on to customers	1
Heavy Vehicle (Semi) and we are contracted at a set price for works completed	1
Highly competitive environment	1
Homeless service	1
Horticultural business we can not pass the cost on	1
I am a price taker	1
I am not in an industry where we can	1
I don't think electricity is something to pass on.	1
I only grow sugar	1
I won't have customers if i keep increasing the price of meals	1
I'm in the agriculture sector and we are price takers not setters. We have no option to pass on any increases whether electricity, fuel or water	1
In farming it is not possible.it is only when there is no produce available they will pay more.	1
In horticulture, you are a price taker. ie can only accept price for product based on supply and demand on the day.	1
It has never been our policy to do this	1
It is not within to scope of our business to pass on this cost.	1
It's not the right thing to do	1
Lose customers	1
Managing at the moment to absorb	1
Market	1
May lose customers if cost increase was passed on. Competing Overseas products become cheaper. Customers are struggling with their own increasing costs.	1
n/a	3
No ability to do so, prices set by international markets	1
Non for profit	1
Not able to at this time as only the first year trading	1
Not able to pass on to customers.	1
Not at the moment	1
Not bad enough yet	1
Not for profit	1
Not for profit organisation - services are free	1
Not high user	1
Not possible given the nature of our business.	1
Not to lose customers	1
Not yet, competition	1
Not yet, don't want	1
Not yet, might have to	1
Only small part of business	1
Our Business is no longer running	1
Our main customer is the Federal Govt	1
Overseas customers care little for my costs and I am a price taker not a price maker.	1
Price takers	1
Prices are already up there!	1
Prices controlled by supply and demand	1
Prices set	1



**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

Primary producer - unable to dictate prices	1
Primary producer, Cane Farmer, Price taker	1
Primary producer, I don't sell direct to customer.	1
Primary producers unable to do so	1
Products are our supply & demand business	1
Provide low cost to customer, thinking about now	1
Sugar Cane farming business does not have the ability to pass costs on to customers. Price for sugar is set by world market prices.	1
The price doesn't affect you	1
There is a lot of Hairdressers in Mareeba. I need to be competitive & keep costs affordable for my clients!!!! Bums on seats will pay my electricity bills !!!!!	1
They would not understand or accept that basis for a price rise.	1
Unable to	1
Unable to increase costs in a competitive tourism environment.	1
Unable to due to fixed pricing of primary production	1
We are a fish farm we sell at Sydney fish market we cannot increase the price that we sell for we get what the auction pays.	1
We are a professional service business and cannot pass this on if we wish to remain competitive.	1
We are farmers and can't pass on cost increases	1
We are farmers and we don't have the ability to 'pass on' to our produce sales. The price we receive is dictated by Chain stores and market Floors, not by ourselves.	1
We are farmers therefore are not able to pass on our costs. We are forced to absorb any increase in electricity charges.	1
We are farmers, we sell our produce at whatever the market price is we have no say in the price we receive, we have no one to pass any expenses onto like retail does	1
We are fruit farmers and sell directly to market	1
We are price takers.	1
We are unable - as primary producers. We are price takers, not sellers.	1
We cannot pass on a price increase to our customers because we sell fruit to a market that sets the price due to demand. We do not ask for a price for our produce we are told what price we will be getting to sell our produce. We have no choice.	1
We can't. We have to take the price the fish wholesalers will pay or not sell at all. They can get cheap foreign imports and pass them off to the public as Barramundi. So the price has dropped rather than risen naturally.	1
We have a farming business	1
We have solar happy to absorb	1
We haven't as yet, hopefully the change in energy suppliers will help reduce the cost, and we won't need to pass it onto the customers	1
We offer a service and a boutique product that is already high end, its not possible and shouldn't be necessary to increase these fees as our product may become cost prohibitive and we'll have no market. Additional hike in energy fees has had to be absorbed by the business.	1
Will drop the sales	1
Will lose more customers!	1
Work for insurance claims	1
Wouldn't get business	1
You can't compete	1
(blank)	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>219</b>



**APPENDIX 8**

**General Comments**

General comment	Total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As we support a large section of the community who are socio and economically disadvantaged, we see the huge impact the increased power bills have taken on their finances. It has had a negative impact on the community as a whole as well as businesses. 1</li> <li>▪ As we are 'remote' in Chillagoe we have to read our own meters 3 times a year yet we are still hit with rising Meter Services Charge of \$17.34 this last bill. If every household pays that Ergon must be making one hell of a profit!! Our so called solar credit was a 'huge?' sum of 49.41cr last quarter in an area where the sun never stops shining!! We are also hamstrung in many situations due to our postcode of 4871 same as Port Douglas region. 1</li> <li>▪ Aside from cost constraints the reason we haven't moved to solar is that we need access to power at night as well as daytime and we would have to do too many installations to cover everything 1</li> <li>▪ Being a not for profit. It makes it very hard when electricity rises we have to fund raise to cover the cost and with people paying higher electricity they don't have spare money to give 1</li> <li>▪ Catering to the minority of leftie/greenies who howl for "sustainable" power because of the giant hoax of "global warming" is costing our country its wealth. No expansion, no jobs. Money does NOT come from the government; it comes from people who earn it. We cannot create wealth if power costs make it all unviable. Where do you think industry is going to go? 1</li> <li>▪ Cost of pumping water is hurting us very much and we can't survive without them so we are stuck 1</li> <li>▪ Electricity price is set by highly paid directors can we have small business people on the board 1</li> <li>▪ Ergon's fleet of new plant is breathtaking to behold. My business cannot sustain this level of investment in plant and equipment. Does that not suggest Ergon is being profligate with consumers' money because it can? Personally I think it is obscene what has happened to electricity pricing and Government is the only party to blame in QLD. 1</li> <li>▪ Every other industry has been increasing costs carefully at about the CPI but Ergon who is the Qld Govt. have used the fear tactics of the carbon levels to make a gigantic grab for money. We are working harder and harder for less and less money with no holidays or hope insight. These greedy people just tell a bunch more lies and grab more money at our expense. Soon they will have the cost of feeding and housing us and a lifetime of skills will be lost to the country. This is so far past dumb that it can only be called evil... I doubt very much that any of this survey will have any ability to change the hard cold greedy hearts and minds of these short sighted short term politicians and officials bluffing to care [ but they just can't see how or why] because they don't intend to! 1</li> <li>▪ Everything is impacted, very hard to keep absorbing costs and trying to scrimp and save to be able to pay for business expenses, not easy to pass on the increases to customers who are also struggling, not confident to expand or employ more staff because where do you find the extra money. Something has to be done or there won't be any small business viable and left. Government needs to intervene or subsidise or something – every day is a struggle and electricity prices have a real impact. 1</li> <li>▪ Have cut power consumption from 14kw to 8kw and electricity is still too high.. No change in cost , except for going up... 1</li> <li>▪ Have done what we can to reduce the use of electricity but the bills still keep getting higher 1</li> <li>▪ Have no heating because power too high. Have done all that I can to cut consumption and still too high.. Last account was \$1000.00 higher....we don't get a wage because we can't afford to give ourselves a wage 1</li> <li>▪ Having changed to a different provider we are unable to change back to Ergon which is unfortunate that you can't go back. The fees charged by energy companies seem to be higher than contract and confuse the situation by having many different charges. 1</li> <li>▪ Higher electricity bills less monies will be spent locally in our businesses and then more local businesses will be closing and our franchisee in the towns will just continue going ahead 1</li> </ul>	

- Higher the electricity price the less margin in our profit. As a primary producer we never know what prices are at markets as one day varies from next. Plus weather plays big part as you need to grow crop first before you can sell it so expenses are already made. 1
- I believe that higher bill will significantly impact on higher productivity. 1
- If electricity costs continue to increase, we may have to discontinue our business. 1
- If the cost of electricity continues to rise I will be forced to reduce the amount of plantings of crops on my farm. I simply can't afford these ridiculous costs. Can't be viable? 1
- In aquaculture aeration is critical to fish survival it cannot be turned off or reduced without the fish dying. 1
- It impacts my business due to clients spending power being reduced resulting in a drop in turnover 1
- It mainly affects the economy, and hard for the businesses to grow. 1
- Loss of productivity farmers are having to switch off their pumps, small businesses are not expanding 1
- No 1
- Not only are the electricity costs increasing but the incentive to go solar with the option to feed back into the grid and gain credit from Ergon has decreased. 1
- People are struggling to keep their heads above water.. 1
- Prices are out of control From my personal experience Ergon staff and services are very unorganised and there is a distinct lack of communication between departments. From my experience as an adviser I believe that the incomes being paid are nothing short of ridiculous and would account for a large part of the price increases. Ergon provides less and less service for a greater cost. 1
- Sell the assets. 1
- Should not sell coal to other countries cheaper than us Look in your own back yard..we will be left with pot holes in our country and nothing for us.... 1
- Small Business deal with enough charges and surcharges thrown at them by the gov and banks. In small communities such as Mareeba small businesses open and close within no time at all as we can't afford the constant increases that constantly hack at the profit line. 1
- Solar is not an option for us as we irrigate at night with overhead sprinklers when there's less wind for even coverage. Irrigating is our biggest expense on our farm due to what we pay for power. So because of power prices going up all the time. It makes it hard to be profitable. It's absolutely ridiculous for what we pay for power. 1
- The competition for work doesn't allow people to pass on the cost.. So we have to wear the impact 1
- The service fee and Meter Service Charge should be removed, these are relatively new fees. 1
- This government does not care about small business it is how much they can screw us over. Ergon is own by the Qld government and they do not want any competition in the north. They won't allow us to have a clean coal gas fired power station. Someone needs to have a set of balls and stand up to them. Nothing will ever change. 1
- This is a real concern. When is enough enough? 1
- Too much politics bullshit stuff tainted about. Politicians don't know the answer and just won't admit it. 1
- We are finding it extremely difficult to meet the rising costs of electricity and are now planning to change most of our higher cost tariffs to diesel powered pumps and reduce our use of electricity. If prices continue to rise we will look at totally replacing electricity with diesel pumps to irrigate our crops 1
- We are in the process of renewing irrigation pumps, upgrading sprinklers main lines etc to try and save money on power because of the increasing power bills all the time. 1
- We are installing a number of solar spot lights throughout the facility in an effort to reduce electricity consumption. These are not suitable for the entire facility however, due to our extensive tree coverage through out the yards. 1

**IMPACT OF HIGHER ELECTRICITY PRICES ON BUSINESSES  
MAREEBA DISTRICT**

▪ We cannot continue to absorb increases in electricity prices. Being a mixed farming business many of our crops require large input costs with very small profit margins. We are also disadvantaged by freight costs to southern markets. We will soon have to consider giving away some of our traditional crops that will reflect on local businesses.	1
▪ We invested in a solar system to assist with the rising cost of electricity, as prior to this we were on average each quarter receiving approx. \$\$ 800-900 bill....Which we knew we could not keep paying without looking for an alternative....the system will become mute if the electricity still keeps rising, questioning as to why we invested large amount into the panels. Otherwise there are other alternative we will have to have a look at batteries ??	1
▪ We use a lot of freezers and fridges and the electricity bills are affecting us a lot.	1
▪ What hope do we have when the government does not care. All they worry about is keeping the greens happy and to hell with everything else.	1
▪ Will go out of business if it keeps getting higher	1
▪ You have asked about the direct cost of electricity bill, but the cost of raising electricity runs down the supply chain and I presume will have a larger effect on the cost of the manufactured materials we purchase to carry out the construction jobs in our industry. If the costs of all our materials raise to cover the cost of raising electricity, at the manufacturing phase the transport phase the sales phase that will have a larger impact, then just the direct electricity cost at this business site. It may also directly affect our customer base and customers may have less disposable income for spending.	1
▪ (blank)	174
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>219</b>