



Why Australian SMEs need to do more about Energy Efficiency

Findings from Connection Research's Business Energy Consumption in Australia 2010 report...

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Sydney, 6 May 2010. Australian Small and Medium Enterprises want to be energy efficient, but most don't know how to do it. That is one of the key findings of Business Energy Consumption in Australia 2010, a new market analysis report based on a detailed survey of over 1,000 Australian SMEs. The 150 page report, based on a detailed online survey, investigates what Australian SMEs are doing to reduce energy consumption. It shows that although energy efficiency is a high priority, as the price of electricity continues to rise, nearly half of all SMEs would be willing to pay more for energy if they knew that it was lowering overall carbon emissions.

This provides an enormous opportunity for environmental and sustainability consultants to assist with the implementation of energy efficiency strategies and plans for SMEs, says Cassandra Phillips, Connection Research's Sustainability Portfolio Manager. The report clearly shows that Australian SMEs are ready and willing to be educated on best practice policies and procedures.

Incentives, rebates and grants are important mechanisms to assist business to invest in becoming more energy efficient. But few businesses have even heard of the incentives that are currently available. The greatest inhibitor to change, cited by 40% of respondents, is the cost of changing to new energy efficient equipment.

The evolving energy market impacts consumers, utilities, state and federal governments and consultants in the field. The consumer now has a choice of retailer and a choice in what kind of electricity they use. With all these choices you would think that SME consumers are better off but are they?

A significant proportion of business owners remain ignorant about critical climate change and energy issues, and around 20% are climate change deniers. Awareness and knowledge of building rating schemes is very low, with the majority of respondents unaware of the many energy efficiency rebate schemes being offered by government.

Business owners want help and assistance to become more energy efficient. One third say that a lack of time and knowledge are inhibiting factors, 60% say they want more information about how to use energy more efficiently, and 20% say they don't know what to change but would like to receive an energy efficiency audit.

Business owners' knowledge needs to improve, says Ms Phillips. The government needs to further promote energy efficiency rebates, and utilities need to provide better services before Australian businesses can effectively measure and mitigate their use of energy and become more energy efficient.

This is just some of the many insights into the market detailed in the Business Energy Consumption in Australia 2010 report, based on a comprehensive survey of over 1000 Australian businesses. The report is available now.

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About Connection Research

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Connection Research is an Australian market research and analysis company with a focus on corporate and consumer usage of sustainable and digital technologies. Its primary methodology is demand-side research, surveying consumers of technology about usage patterns, attitudes and plans. It operates across four practice areas: Green IT, Carbon and Compliance, Building Industry and Trades, and Community Sustainability.

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