The Australia Institute
Research that matters.

Polling – Demand Response

Most Australians want to play active role in managing demand peaks through demand response

Key Results

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,421 Australians in September 2017 about their attitudes towards managing peak demand through the energy conservation technology called 'demand response'.

Demand response rewards electricity customers for conserving electricity during periods of peak demand, to keep the grid stable and reduce price peaks. Consumers can use this technology to sell 'negawatts' of reduced demand into the National Electricity Market. The benefits of demand response were outlined in a recent report by The Australia Institute.[1]

Most think demand response is the better way to plan for peak demand

Respondents were asked which they thought was a better way to plan for peak demand: demand response, or building new grid infrastructure and power stations?

	Total
Reduce peak demand by offering electricity consumers discounts or payments if they choose to conserve electricity during those periods.	**64%**
Build or upgrade power plants and grid infrastructure to cope with peak demand, paid for by all power users through increased prices.	**28%**
Don't know / not sure	**8%**

- Two thirds of respondents (64%) thought demand response was the better way to plan for peak demand.

[1] http://www.tai.org.au/content/finkel%E2%80%99s-forgotten-finding-%E2%80%93-%E2%80%98negawatts%E2%80%99

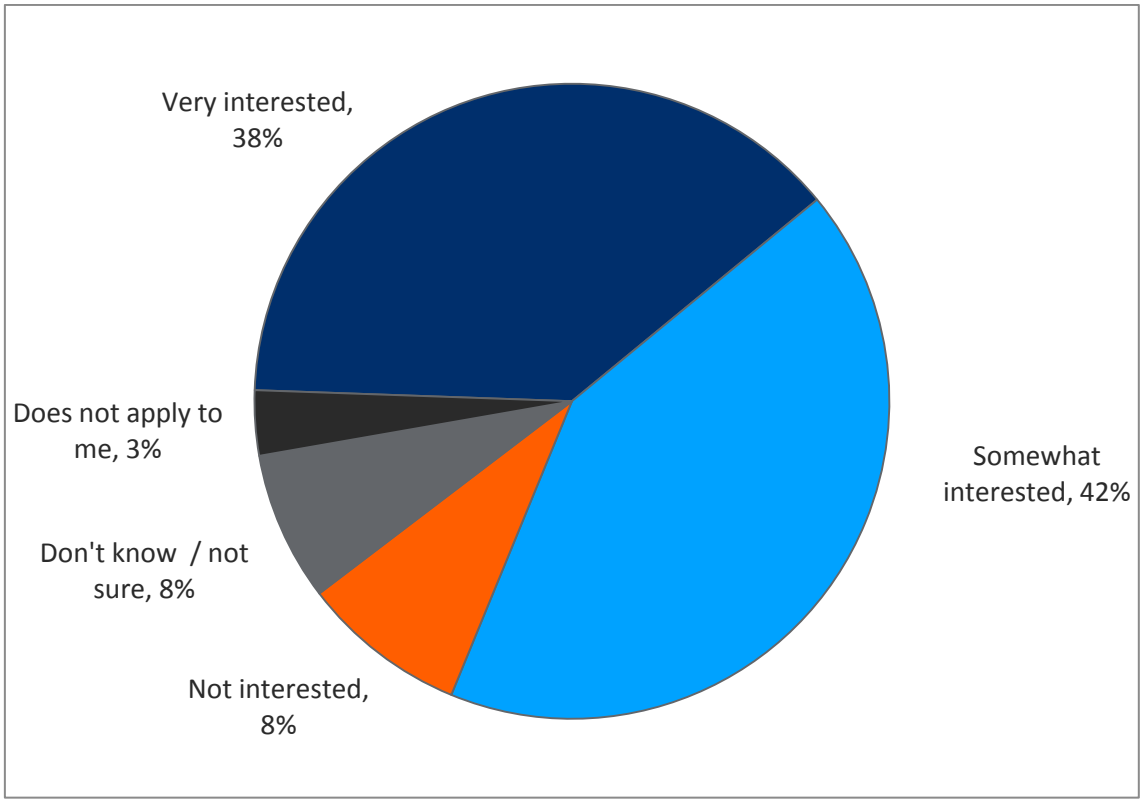
- Less than one third (28%) thought building new power stations and new grid infrastructure was the better way.
- A majority of voters for all parties selected demand response as the better plan for peak demand.
    - The lowest support for demand response was 58%, with LNP voters.
- A majority of respondents from the three largest states selected demand response.
    - Support was highest in Queensland (69%).

Very strong interest in being part of demand response

Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in receiving payments for conserving energy during short periods during peak demand.

- Four in five respondents (81%) said they are interested in participating in demand response schemes.
- 38% were very interested, while 42% were somewhat interested.
- Less than one in ten (8%) are not interested; similar numbers were not sure.

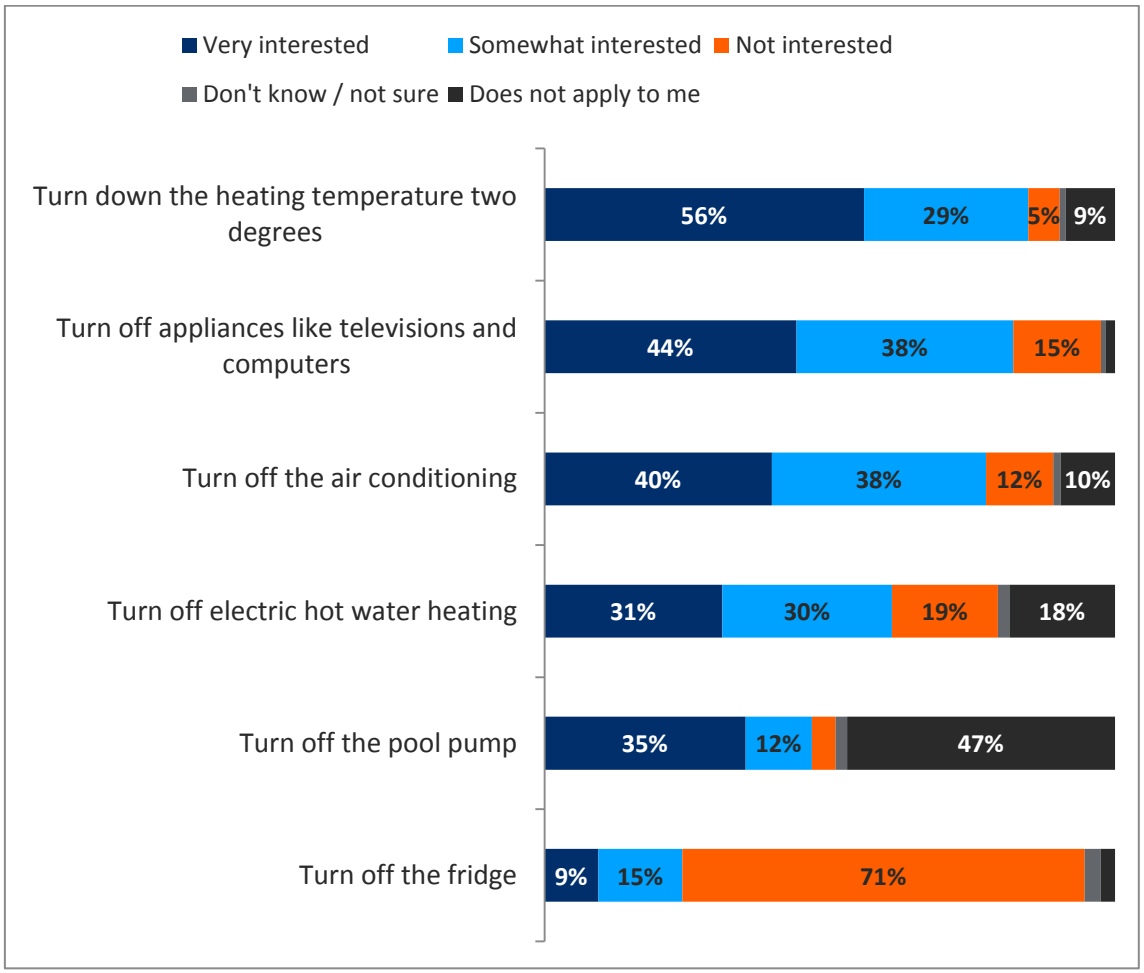
Would you be interested in participating in demand response?



Breakdown of support for specific demand response measures by households

Those who said they were interested in participating in demand response were then asked about their interest in taking particular demand response actions over a thirty minute period. The simple measures which would be used in such a scheme are those that cause no or little impact on comfort, such as turning down heating or air conditioning or turning off a pool pump. The grid operator could use demand response to curtail demand peaks for a half hour period.

Would you be interested in receiving payments for doing any of the following?



Would you be interested in receiving payments for doing any of the following?

Conservation measure	Total interested	Not interested
Turn down the heating temperature two degrees	**85%**	5%
Turn off appliances like televisions and computers	**82%**	15%
Turn off the air conditioning	**77%**	12%
Turn off the pool pump	**47%**	4%
Turn off electric hot water heating	**61%**	19%
Turn off the fridge	24%	**71%**

There was strong interest in participating in most demand response options, including:

- turning down heating two degrees (56% very interested, 85% total interested);
- turning off appliances like TVs and computers (44% very interested, 82% total);
- turning off air-conditioning (40% very interested, 77% total interested).
- turning off the pool pump (88% of those who said it applied to them; 47% were interested in total, including 35% very interested, while another 47% said this did not apply.)

The only option that most respondents were not interested in was turning off the fridge (71% not interested).

Method

Between 17 and 26 September 2017 The Australia Institute conducted a national survey of 1,421 Australians through Research Now, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and state or territory.

Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning. These leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs, and are also shown separately. “LNP” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” includes Nick Xenophon Team and Independent/Other.

Results are shown for larger states, where margins of error were 6% or lower. These are the three largest states, making up most of the National Electricity Market.

Detailed Results

These questions are about electricity demand. During periods of very high electricity demand, or 'peak' demand, power prices increase greatly and on a few occasions a year there may be risks for grid stability or shortages.

Which of the following do you think is a better way to plan for periods of peak demand?

	Total	Male	Female	LNP	ALP	Greens	PHON	Other	Undec
Reduce peak demand by offering electricity consumers discounts or payments if they choose to conserve electricity during those periods.	**64%**	58%	70%	58%	66%	72%	64%	65%	64%
Build or upgrade power plants and grid infrastructure to cope with peak demand, paid for by all power users through increased prices.	**28%**	35%	21%	35%	25%	21%	30%	23%	24%
Don't know / not sure	**8%**	8%	9%	7%	9%	7%	6%	12%	12%

	NSW	Qld	Vic
Reduce peak demand by offering electricity consumers discounts or payments if they choose to conserve electricity during those periods.	63%	69%	57%
Build or upgrade power plants and grid infrastructure to cope with peak demand, paid for by all power users through increased prices.	30%	23%	32%
Don't know / not sure	7%	8%	11%

The electricity grid operator, AEMO, is exploring how Australian households could be paid to conserve electricity for short periods during peak demand in the grid. Such schemes are in place in other countries. Would you be interested in participating in such a scheme if it were available to you?

	Total	Male	Female	LNP	ALP	Greens	PHON	Other	Undec
Total interested	**81%**	**81%**	**80%**	**79%**	**83%**	**85%**	**75%**	**78%**	**72%**
Very interested	**38%**	39%	38%	36%	40%	54%	32%	35%	30%
Somewhat interested	**42%**	42%	43%	44%	43%	32%	43%	43%	42%
Not interested	**8%**	10%	7%	9%	6%	9%	13%	9%	9%
Does not apply to me	**3%**	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%	6%	4%	6%
Don't know / not sure	**8%**	7%	9%	8%	8%	4%	7%	9%	13%

	NSW	Qld	Vic
Total interested	**81%**	**81%**	**78%**
Very interested	38%	42%	34%
Somewhat interested	43%	39%	44%
Not interested	8%	8%	11%
Does not apply to me	3%	4%	2%
Don't know / not sure	7%	7%	9%

(Those who said they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ interested were then asked the following)

Would you be interested in receiving payments for doing any of the following energy conservation measures during peak demand for a half hour period?

(Options presented in randomised order)

	Total interested	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not interested	Does not apply to me	Don't know / not sure
Turn down the heating temperature two degrees	**85%**	**56%**	29%	5%	9%	1%
Turn off appliances like televisions and computers	**82%**	**44%**	38%	15%	2%	1%
Turn off the air conditioning	**78%**	**40%**	38%	12%	10%	1%
Turn off the pool pump	**47%**	35%	12%	4%	**47%**	2%
Turn off electric hot water heating	**61%**	31%	30%	19%	18%	2%
Turn off the fridge	24%	9%	15%	71%	3%	3%