

Participant Information Sheet – energy users

Researchers:

We are Laura Jones, Brenda Martin, Dr Phillipa Watson, and Dr Hedda Ransan-Cooper. We are researchers at the School of Engineering in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the Australian National University and are conducting research funded by Energy Consumers Australia (ECA).

Project Title: Customer-focussed distribution network capacity management

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** We are conducting research on how the electricity network can be built in ways that reflect the values of people who connect to it (particularly private individuals). This is particularly relevant now as the energy system decarbonises to mitigate climate change. There are significant changes occurring and it is important that we consider people’s perspectives during this change. This research seeks to understand what people hold important (values) and help us understand how these can be used to create energy system management methods that better reflect these values. It will use a method called “value sensitive design”. In this work we will be looking at documents and asking people in focus groups to help us understand what is important to both energy users and the energy industry. We will then use that information to build some scenarios for how the energy system might make decisions differently with consideration of energy user values. Then we will take these scenarios back to energy users in more focus groups and ask participants to reflect on them and refine them.
- **Participants:** A big part of this research is focus groups. Focus groups allow us to enhance and construct understanding collectively by talking in a group. Because you are an energy user I am asking you to participate in two focus groups of 1 ¾ hours. These focus groups will be 3 months apart so we can first understand your thoughts on key values and then check in with you about some of our analysis and ideas for how things could change in the future. Each focus group will have between four and eight participants. We expect the total number of participants in this research to be between 16 and 32. This includes a separate focus group involving representatives from the energy industry.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** What you tell us in focus groups will be converted to text, analysed and used to report findings in a deidentified form. For the first focus group we will try to understand how energy features in your life and what is important to you. In the second we will understand how you feel the scenarios we have developed could be improved. The results of this work will be shared in through a project report, presentations, and peer-reviewed published articles. Reports will be freely available on the www.bsgip.com website.
- **Project Funding:** This project has received funding through a grant from Energy Consumers Australia.

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** We are seeking your voluntary involvement in this research. You do not have to be involved in this research. You can pull out of the research at any time. You can also request we withdraw all or part of your contributions. We will do our best to identify and withdraw data at your request. Withdrawing data from a focus group transcript can be difficult as we sometimes are not able to identify which people provided which comments. Additionally, comments in a focus group feed later discussion and other people can base what they say on what you have said. If you want to pull out you can contact us by phone or email (listed under “queries and concerns” in this document) or tell us before or during focus groups

- **What does participation in the research entail?** Taking part in this research involves two 1 ¾ hour focus groups. We will record the focus groups and convert them to text. We will destroy these recordings at the end of the project. We have mentioned there are two focus groups to attend and we are aiming to have three different groups of people involved. If you choose to take part, you will be invited to be with the same group of people both times.
 1. **Focus group 1:** This focus group will explore what is important to you in your interaction with energy (values) and how these feature in your life. We are aiming to hold this first round of focus group in November or December 2022.
 2. **Focus group 2:** This focus group will explore a set of scenarios that have been generated by the project team. These scenarios describe how the energy system could be managed in the future and are based on the values that we discuss in the first set of focus groups, what we discuss in another focus group with industry experts, and what we find looking at documents that are produced by the energy system about regulatory decisions. We are aiming to hold this second round of focus group sometime in February or March 2023.
- **Location and Duration:** Research will take place face to face in Canberra, ACT and Hobart, Tasmania. Research will include participation in two 1 ¾ hour focus groups. Your total time commitment overall will be approximately 3 ½ hours plus travel time. The first focus group will be between November and December 2022. The second will be between February and March 2023.
Remuneration: Participants will be remunerated with a \$50 voucher for each focus group. Tea, coffee, and snacks will be provided.
- **Risks:** While all focus group discussions are deidentified for any reporting or publications, there is a small risk that you could be identified in the research outputs despite our best efforts to hide your identity. While we will keep what you tell us confidential and ask other participants to do the same, we can't guarantee that other participants won't share what you say. We ask that you do not say anything that could harm yourself or others, or tell us anything that is confidential. If there are sensitive issues discussed, you can let us know and we will ensure this issue is treated appropriately in our reporting. You may know other participants in the focus group. While we will facilitate discussion and this is a topic that is unlikely to be distressing, there is a chance there will be conflict or disagreement. If this conflict makes you uncomfortable you can draw our attention to it, and we will steer conversation away from the topic. Alternatively, or additionally, you may choose not to participate in that part of the discussion or ask to leave the room. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact us (see Queries and Concerns section).
- We have provided some links to support services you can use if there are any issues that arise for you out of this research. If COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings happen to be back in place, we will organise the focus groups so they limit direct contact. Focus groups can take place online or be postponed if needed. We will monitor, adhere to and communicate the latest COVID advice from public health services. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact us (see Queries and Concerns section).
- **Sensitive, personal information:** While we are not seeking to collect personal or sensitive information in the focus group discussions, we understand that sometimes participants may make points in the discussion using personal details or details that may be sensitive. For example, it may be useful to describe a health challenge in order to explain a value, or it might be important to talk about a particular location to explain a problem with electricity supply. If sensitive or personal information is mentioned that supports findings and discussion in the project, we will make sure we report these points in a way that is general and not identifying. Additionally, if there are sensitive or personal details that may identify you in the focus group transcripts, these parts of the text will be removed and replaced with more general explainers before the deidentified transcripts are archived. We cannot hide your identity

from other participants in the focus groups. Additionally, the project team will collect other information (such as email address or phone number) so we can contact you.

- **Benefits:** It is unlikely that you will personally benefit from this research. Your insights as energy users are very important and we anticipate that this work will support the energy industry make decisions in the future
- **Implications:** Participation in the research is not an expectation of your association with the research team or any organisation, and your choice will not affect your relationship with any party.

Confidentiality:

- Your data will be protected as far as the law allows. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will de-identify what you tell us. You will not be identifiable within published outputs unless you have selected otherwise.
- You will witness the discussion in focus groups. We ask that you maintain the confidentiality of focus group discussions. You should refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person in the workshop environment. Also, you may know other participants in focus groups. If this occurs and means you would prefer not to participate you can leave at any time.
- There are some circumstances where we must disclose what you told us by law (for instance if someone's health or safety is at risk). We will not be discussing things where situations like this are likely to come up.
- Only the project team (listed at the top of this letter) will have access to the 'raw'(identifiable) material you provide us.

Privacy Notice:

- In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:
 - Access or seek correction to their personal information;
 - Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Sharing:

Sharing of de-identified data with other researchers is becoming more common, especially for publicly-funded research. Data sharing can help other researchers to independently check research conclusions and can help them to develop new ideas. The data collected as part of this project will be de-identified and may be made available to other researchers on request for the purposes of reanalysis and replication and for new analysis. We will ensure that they have ethics approval for their research, and will consider any ethical issues arising from our sharing of the data, including confidentiality.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** In accordance with ANU Code of Research Conduct, identifiable data will only be stored on ANU computers and data storage. Recordings and transcripts of identifiable material will be password protected and encrypted. Printouts with your details will be stored in a secure and locked location at the ANU. ECA may access de-identified data if required for auditing our performance in this research.
- **How long:** All data will be retained and securely stored for at least five years following publications arising from the research.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** After the storage period, all identifying details will be removed from the data and the non-identified data may be archived at the Australian Data Archive (www.ada.edu.au) for use in later research, including potentially by other researchers.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** If you require more information please get in touch with Laura Jones at mobile 0419 386 270, email laura.jones@anu.edu.au or Phillipa Watson on 02 6125 9062, email phillipa.watson@anu.edu.au
- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you feel distressed by any questions, there are several phone services that can provide support such as Lifeline (13 11 14). A list can be found at <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-helplines>

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2022/499). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au