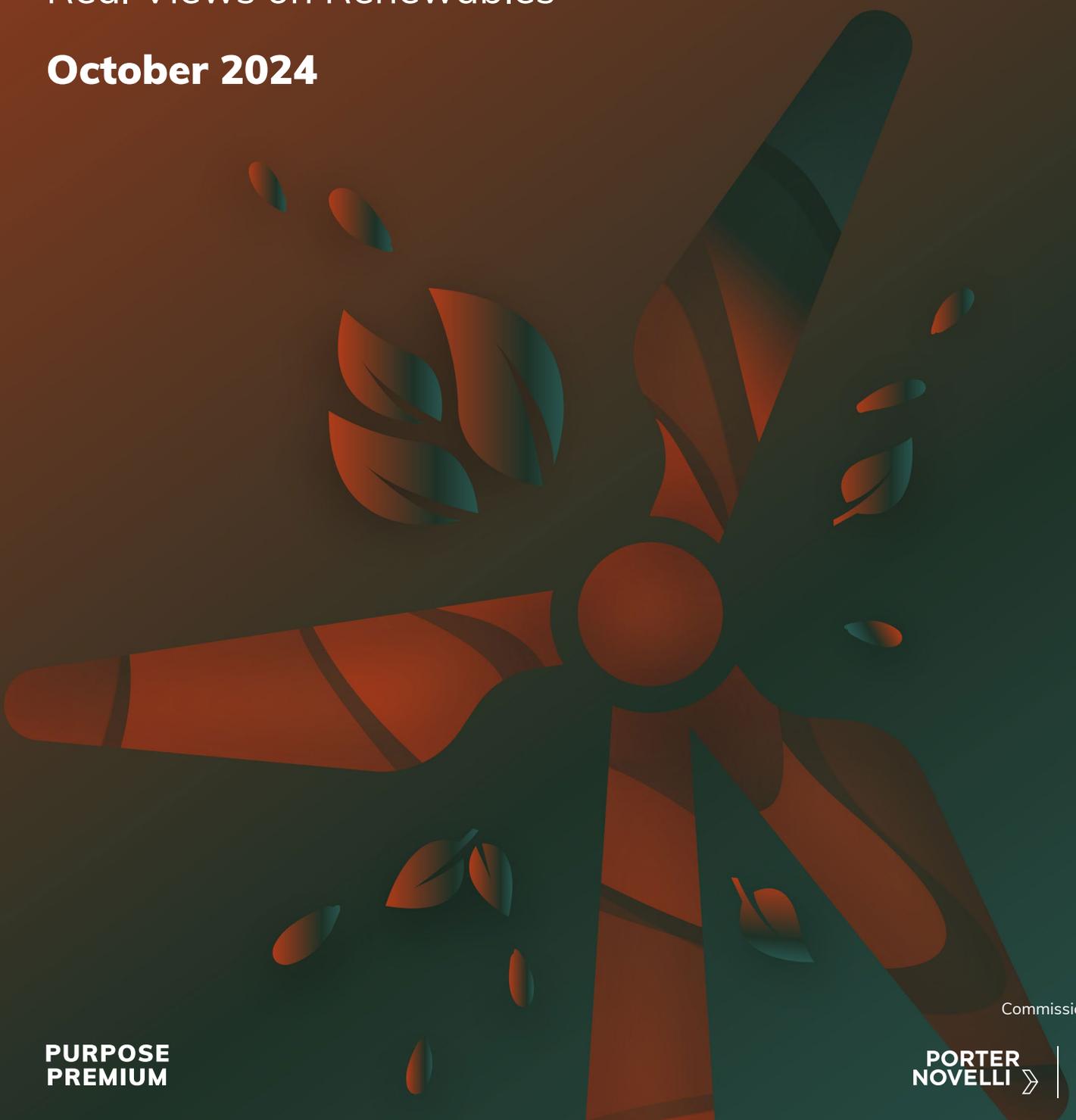# WINDS OF CHANGE

Regional Australians'
Real Views on Renewables

October 2024

PURPOSE PREMIUM

Contents

PORTER NOVELLI | Quantum Market Research

Introduction

Porter Novelli works across Australia's regional communities — in agribusiness, public and community health, on government initiatives and in a range of sectors, including the rollout of renewable energy projects.

We have been increasingly frustrated in recent years by the portrayal of the renewable rollout as a zero-sum *Hunger Games* conflict between urban lefty latte sippers and under-informed rural people.

Based on our deep experience working across regional and rural Australia every day, we believe any resistance to renewable energy projects is nuanced, and an over-simplified portrayal of it undermines the actual motives of regional people, some of whom have legitimate grievances about the way these projects are being rolled out.

The transition to a low-carbon economy is inevitable — and it's happening now. We asked ourselves, how can this be done better, without unnecessary, costly, damaging conflict?

We believe the key is engaging, listening, and communicating better. By engaging early, listening to communities' aspirations, demonstrating clear benefits, investing in communities, and improving communication, we can gain their permission.

As a communications firm, we know that this debate is emotional, but also that real facts are essential to guiding this essential process.

That's why we have partnered with one of Australia's leading market research firms, Quantum Market Research, to conduct research with a representative sample of Australians. Our goal: to create a model for more effective community engagement, rooted in real insights.

This report presents the findings of that research.

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The context

The lost decade of climate inaction (2013-2022)

From 2013 to 2022, Australia was stuck in a cycle of indecision on energy policy. The downfall of the National Energy Guarantee – a policy designed to ensure energy reliability and reduce emissions – led to political turmoil, ousted Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, and left the country without a clear energy strategy for nearly a decade. While the global climate crisis worsened, this uncertainty slowed investment in renewables, setting Australia back in its race to develop renewable energy infrastructure.

Where we stand now

Despite this rocky past, Australia has committed to ambitious targets: a 43 per cent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. This means 83 per cent of our electricity needs to come from renewable sources by 2030. The good news? Almost 40 per cent of the electricity in our main grid already comes from renewable energy, including wind, solar and hydro projects across the country[1].

2005

CO₂

2030

43%
REDUCTION

2050

NET ZERO
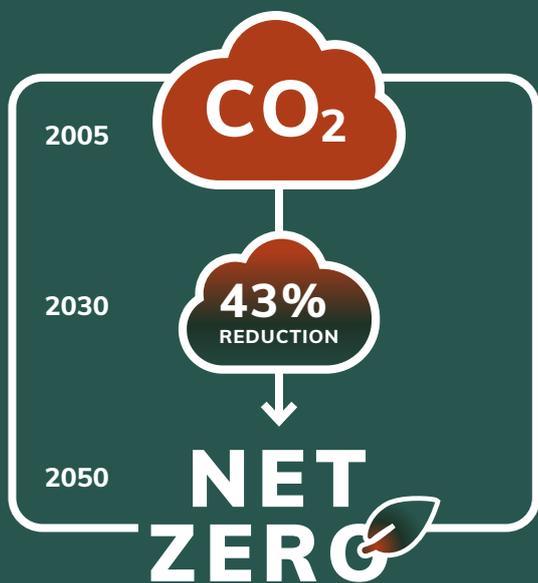
The cost-of-living crisis and renewables

As the rollout of renewable energy projects gains momentum, the transition has become a "political football" once again, driven by the cost-of-living crisis, which is dominating our policy and politics. With a federal election looming, the debate over renewables could morph into a referendum on nuclear energy. In the meantime, the necessities for life – food, water, and energy – have somehow become entangled in a new round of culture wars.

Misinformation, disinformation and resistance

Not all resistance to renewable energy projects is misplaced. Many regional Australians feel they've long provided food and fibre for the rest of the country and are now being asked to power the nation's transition to clean energy, at their own expense.

While renewable energy infrastructure is necessary – and inevitable – some proponents have blundered into regions like a bull in a china shop and mishandled community engagement, causing resentment and delays as projects are bogged down in protests and court battles.

Traditional media outlets, locked in a battle for readership and clicks, have turned to more sensational and polarised headlines, exaggerating these conflicts. This has created a narrative that regional Australians oppose climate action and do not support renewable energy, a view amplified by misinformation and political interests. Opponents are capitalising on our fragmented attention across multiple platforms, which lack fact checking.

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[1] Clean Energy Council, Clean Energy Report 2004

68%

68% of Australians agree that "climate change is happening now".

58%

58% of Australians agree that "human activity is the primary cause of climate change".

(Down from 65% in 2023)

The role of social media

Social media plays a big part in this information war. Almost half of Australians (49 per cent)[2] use social media to access news. While these platforms can be used to engage with diverse communities, they also serve as a breeding ground for disinformation. This has likely contributed to some concerning trends: the number of Australians who agree "climate change is happening now" has dropped to 68 per cent (a five per cent decrease since 2023), and those who agree "human activity is the main cause of climate change" has fallen to 58 per cent (a seven per cent decrease since 2023)[3].

Although a clear majority still believe in these realities, the fact that settled science is being questioned underscores the impact of today's fragmented, polluted information environment.

49%
of Australians use social media to access news.

[2] University of Canberra, Digital News Report: Australia 2024
[3] Quantum Market Research, AustraliaNOW September 2024

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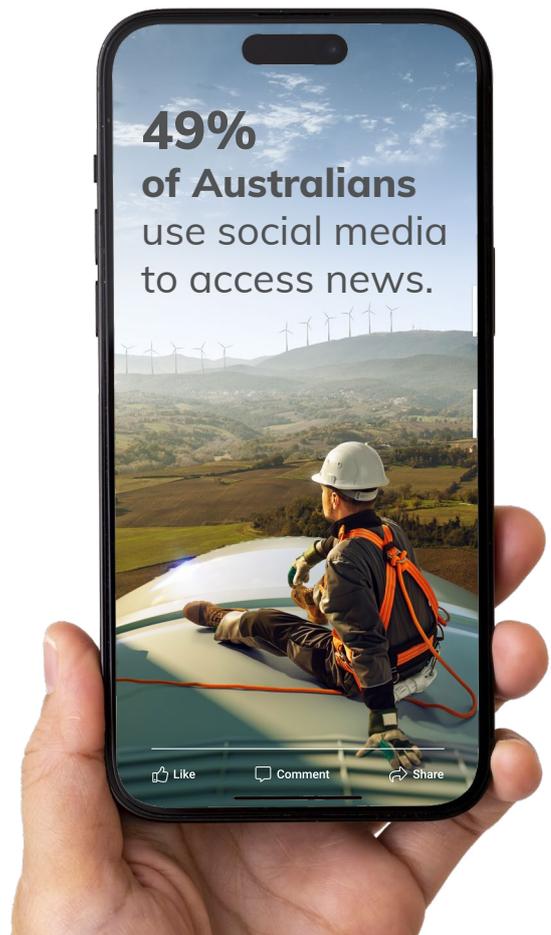
Our purpose with this research

In this complex landscape, we believe the portrayal of regional Australians as simply "anti-renewables" is oversimplified, misleading and fails to acknowledge the complexities of regional communities' concerns.

To dig deeper, we set out to answer three key questions:

1. Are regional Australians really against renewables?

2. How is disinformation affecting Australians' views on renewables?

3. What are the communications implications for renewable energy projects, and how can proponents win over hearts and minds and gain permission?

This last question is critical, because hearts and minds *must* come before poles and wires.

Gaining community buy-in is crucial. Successful renewable energy rollouts require more than just physical infrastructure – they need strong engagement and communication strategies to avoid delays and keep the momentum going.

So considering this, what did our research uncover?

Regional Australians are supportive of renewable energy projects

Contrary to the widespread belief that regional Australians are opposed to renewable energy projects, the reality is far more encouraging.

The fact is that two-thirds (67 per cent) of Australians, whether living in cities or rural areas, are supportive of renewable energy projects — including initiatives in their own communities.

There is no gap between the support for renewables in cities and in the regions.

A two-thirds majority for any policy is a significant endorsement, particularly when compared to other initiatives that struggle to gain such widespread approval.

This level of support is striking, especially considering the often-negative portrayal of regional opposition in some sections of the media and in our public discourse.

This data challenges the dominant narrative and paints a much more optimistic picture of Australia's readiness for a clean energy future. It also reflects the reality that regional Australians are likely more aware of the impacts of climate change. Many of Australia's innovative farmers have been dealing with the real effects of a changing climate for decades, and are concerned about a future in which Australia's climate rapidly becomes hotter and less predictable.

Percentage of Australians supportive of renewable energy projects

In general	67%
When located in regional location in general	64%
When located in your region or local area	59%

ABC NEWS

Governments urged to take control of renewable rollout to combat community distrust.

Jane Norman

The Guardian

'There's angry people out there': inside the renewable energy resistance in regional Australia.

Aston Brown

The narrative of regional resistance has taken hold

Despite strong support for renewable energy projects across Australia, an ongoing disinformation campaign has unfairly skewed perceptions of regional communities and their views.

The truth is, 66 per cent of people in regional areas are in favour of renewable energy projects, a clear majority. Yet, Australians believe that support in regional areas is much, much lower — only 49 per cent.

Reality	66%

Perception	49%

In fact, even regional Australians believe support for renewables in regional Australia is much lower than it is. Those in the regions also believe their peers' support is at just 49 per cent.

This significant gap between reality and perception highlights the power of disinformation in distorting the true views of regional Australians.

The narrative that regional communities are opposed to renewables simply doesn't hold water. Regional Australians are just as eager as their metro counterparts to embrace renewable energy. A relatively small number of loud negative voices are being amplified to paint our regional communities in a negative light, overshadowing their support.

The Sydney Morning Herald

'We'll be living with these': The renewable-energy blitz dividing regional towns.
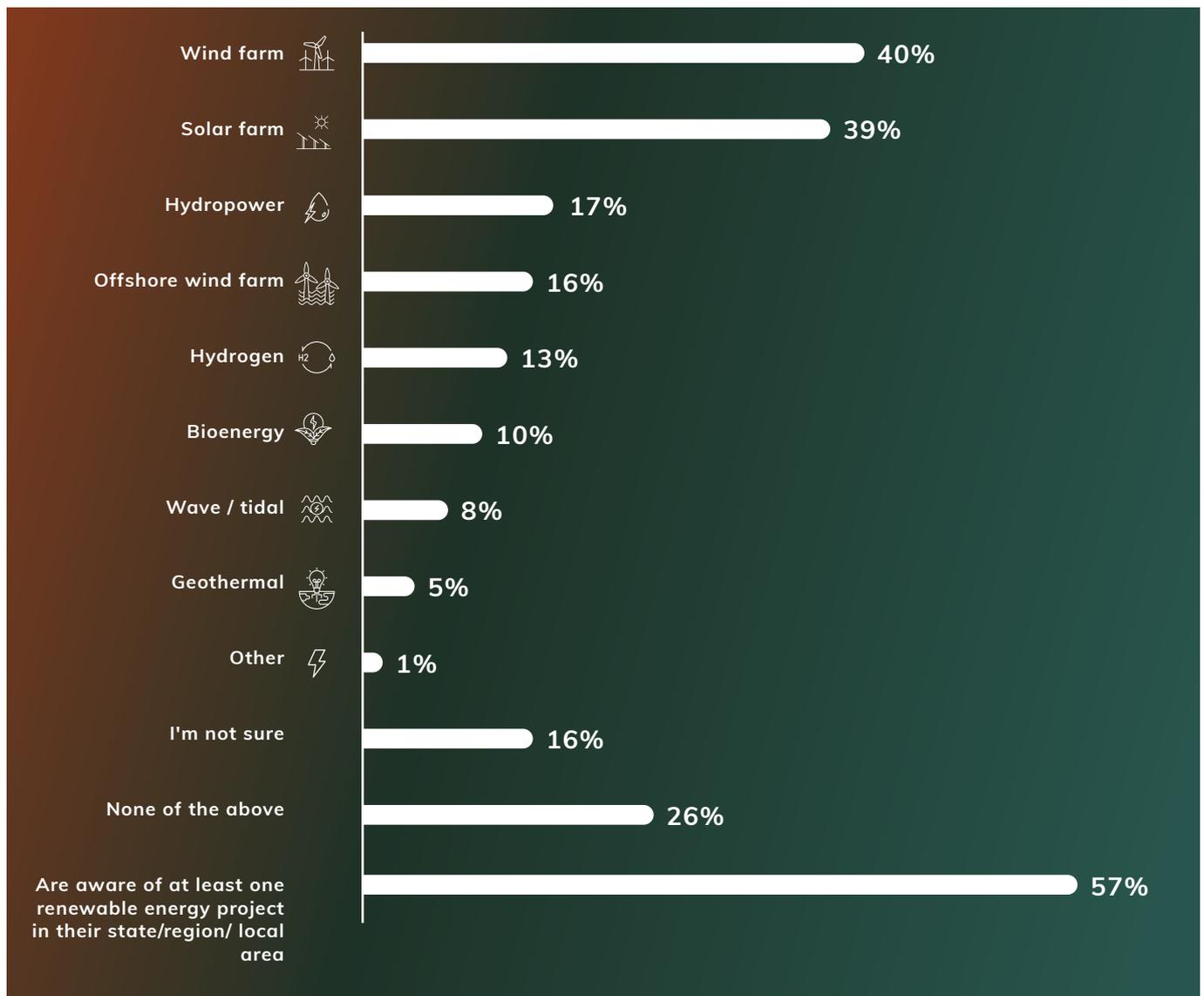
James Button

Low awareness undermines confidence and engagmenet

One of the ways that Australia's transition to renewables can combat cynicism based on questions such as, "what about base load?" and "what happens when the sun doesn't shine?" may be to communicate success and progress.

If more people were aware of the successful, low-drama rollout of hundreds of renewable energy projects across the nation, there would likely be more confidence and willingness to get on board, rather than a wariness of something they perceive as a future possibility, rather than an ongoing process.

As such, a significant barrier to greater public support for renewable energy projects may simply reflect a lack of awareness. Despite more than 300 wind farms and 900 solar farms across Australia[1] – not to mention millions of rooftop solar installations[2] – 43 per cent of Australians are unaware of renewable energy projects in their state or region.

Percentage of Australians aware of renewable energy projects in Australia

Category	Percentage
Wind farm	40%
Solar farm	39%
Hydropower	17%
Offshore wind farm	16%
Hydrogen	13%
Bioenergy	10%
Wave / tidal	8%
Geothermal	5%
Other	1%
I'm not sure	16%
None of the above	26%
Are aware of at least one renewable energy project in their state/region/ local area	57%

[1] Canstar Blue, A Guide to Wind Farms in Australia 2023

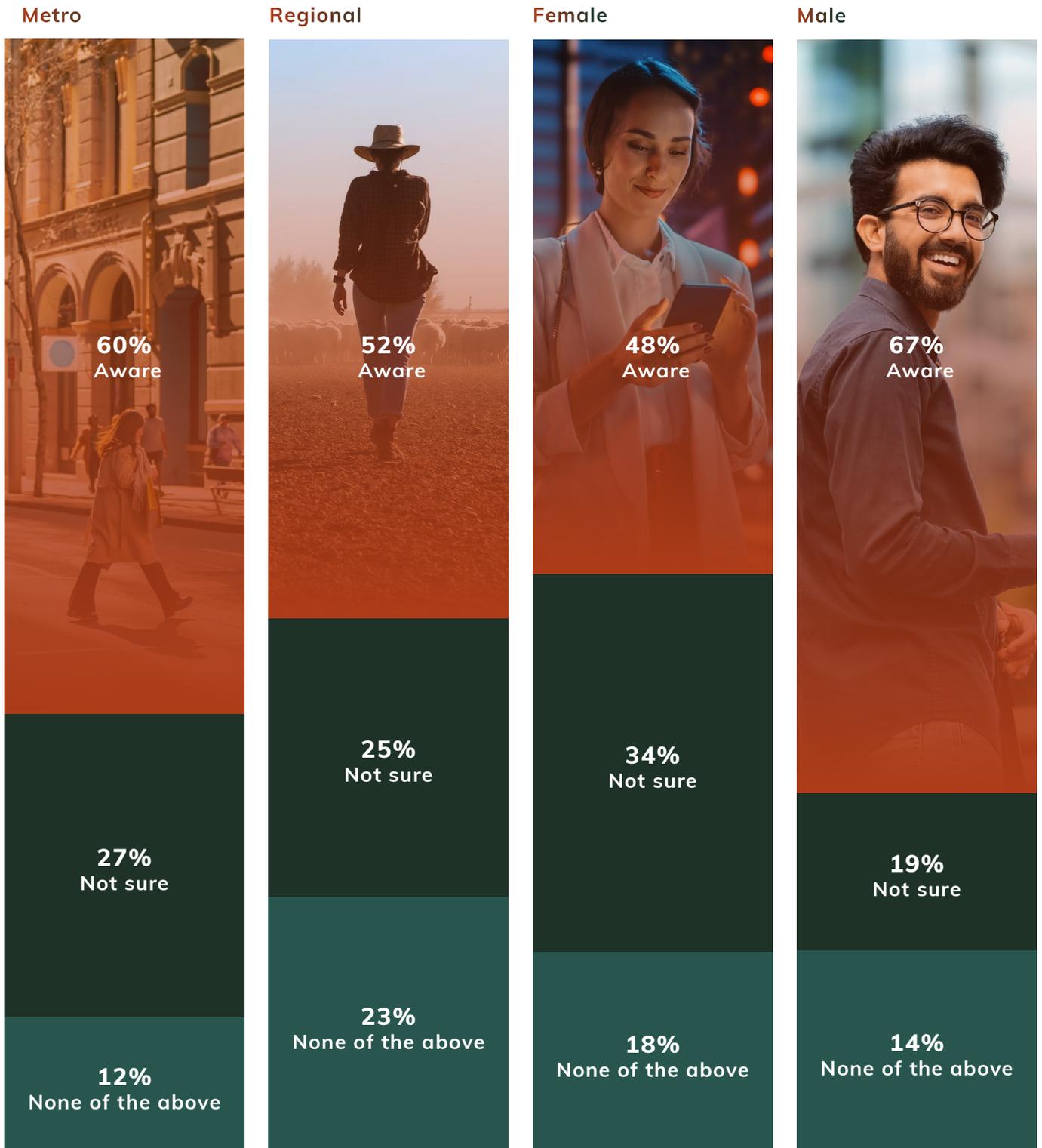[2] Renew Economy, Large Scale Solar Farm Map of Australia, 2024

Astonishingly, one in five Australians (16 per cent) don't know about any renewable projects at all.

Interestingly, more people from metropolitan areas (60 per cent) are aware of renewable energy projects compared to people living in regional areas (52 per cent).

This "out of sight, out of mind" attitude is no doubt limiting community engagement and confidence in the rollout of renewable energy. While 28 per cent of Australians express uncertainty about the potential impacts of these projects, few are aware of the wind (40 per cent) and solar farms (39 per cent) already operating in their areas, quietly generating clean electricity without issue.

Percentage of Australians aware of renewable energy projects in Australia

Metro

60%
Aware

27%
Not sure

12%
None of the above

Regional

52%
Aware

25%
Not sure

23%
None of the above

Female

48%
Aware

34%
Not sure

18%
None of the above

Male

67%
Aware

19%
Not sure

14%
None of the above

One thing about renewables that is true

While general support for renewable energy is strong, a notable gap emerges when people are asked about projects in their own local area. In general, while there is still a clear majority, support drops by eight percentage points when it comes to renewable developments in one's local area. This shift, often referred to as "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBYism), can be a driver of resistance, particularly in Queensland, Victoria, the ACT and Tasmania.

In these regions, the drop in support - from 67 per cent overall to as low as 57 per cent in some cases — shows that despite broad acceptance of renewable energy, localised projects still face pushback. Our experience shows that it is often local neighbours who can see projects — but who are not directly benefiting — who are understandably less supportive.

This represents a challenge but also an opportunity for developers and governments to do more to engage and provide genuine local benefits to communities to shore up support before blundering into a region to launch a project.

Supportive of renewable energy projects

	In general	When located in regional locations	When located in your region or local area
Metro	67%	65%	59%
Regional	66%	63%	60%
NSW	68%	64%	60%
VIC	64%	63%	58%
QLD	66%	63%	57%
WA	76%	72%	64%
SA	63%	64%	59%
Other	70%	63%	58%

We have been convinced that renewable energy = cheap

Australians view cheaper prices as just as important as environmental benefits when it comes to renewable energy, with 49 per cent citing cost savings as a top benefit, almost equal to the 51 per cent who prioritise environmental impact.

This may also reflect not only what Australians perceive as the benefits, but also what we hope will be the benefits, at a time when cost-of-living is our top concern.
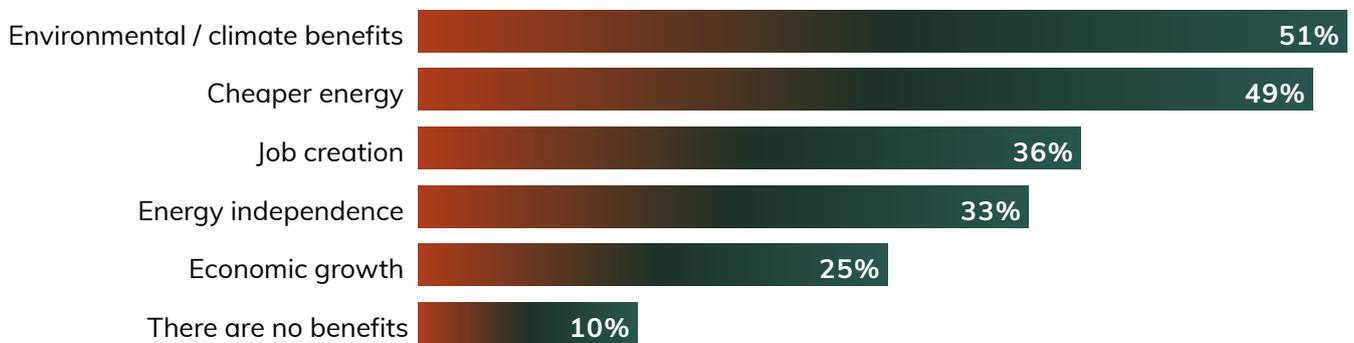
This also highlights a significant communication gap. Detractors have successfully positioned "cheaper energy" as a "strawman" argument to paint renewable energy as a failure. "They said it would deliver cheaper energy, now they're telling us it won't."

The transition to renewables was always going to be inherently complex, costly, and challenging. Digging up coal and burning it is a lot easier, and our entire grid has been based on this for many decades. Undoing this system is complicated but is ultimately designed to help Australia transition to a low-carbon future – a future in which we are not locked out of the world economy.

This strawman argument also ignores the unimaginable costs that come with catastrophic climate change later in this century, which will mean more than just a few hundred dollars on our energy bills.

By allowing this narrative to persist unchecked, Australia risks undermining broader public understanding of the long-term objectives and benefits of the transition to renewables.

Percieved benefits of renewable energy projects

Benefit	Percentage
Environmental / climate benefits	51%
Cheaper energy	49%
Job creation	36%
Energy independence	33%
Economic growth	25%
There are no benefits	10%

Percentage of Australians that will struggle to pay at least one bill in the next three months

Disinformation works

Opponents of the transition to renewables are following a well-worn playbook – flood the zone with enough disinformation and you can seed "enough doubt" to undermine a progressive movement.

Unfortunately, demonstrably false myths about negative impacts of renewable energy projects have gained significant traction.

For example, alarmingly:

37% Believe wind turbines are a major threat to birds and bats.

36% Believe solar panels don't work in cloudy and cold climates.

32% Believe drought will make hydropower unusable.

27% Believe solar projects will reduce agricultural production, hurting farmers and rural communities.

25% Believe low-frequency noise from wind turbines harms human health and causes "wind turbine syndrome."

18% Believe offshore wind farms kill whales.

65% believe at least one common statement

This last statistic — regarding whales and offshore wind farms — is the result of a widely-debunked disinformation campaign with its origins in conservative "think tanks" in the United States.

Daily Mail Australia

Wind turbines in Queensland and NSW are killing rare Aussie wildlife - and wind farm operators are being trained to 'kill' koalas 'humanely' - as labor commits to zero emissions by 2050.

Brittany Chain

SBS News

Wind turbines killing endangered birds
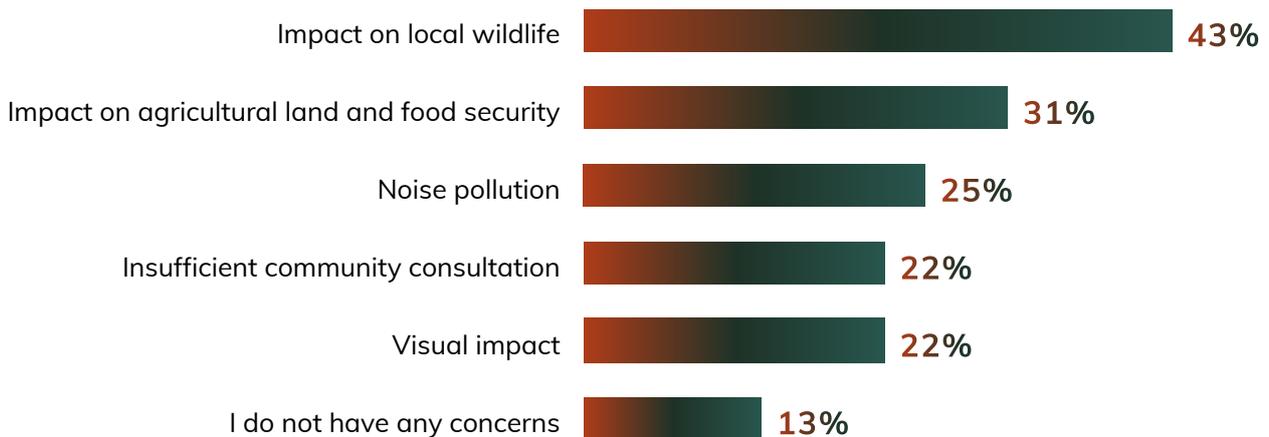
AAP

The Sydney Morning Herald

'Absolutely incorrect': The evidence is in on whales and offshore wind farms

Caitlin Fitzsimmons

These myths are persistent and are shaping public objections to renewable energy projects. When asked about their main concerns, 43 per cent of respondents cited "impact on local wildlife", 31 per cent raised concerns about agricultural land and food security (when Australia exports 71 per cent of the food we grow)[1] and 25 per cent — one in four — cited "noise pollution".

The disinformation campaign is clearly working, leading to misplaced fears and resistance to renewable energy projects.

Main concerns surrounding renewable energy projects

Concern	Percentage
Impact on local wildlife	43%
Impact on agricultural land and food security	31%
Noise pollution	25%
Insufficient community consultation	22%
Visual impact	22%
I do not have any concerns	13%

[1] Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Analysis of Australia's food security and the COVID-19 pandemic

Daily Mail UK - Wind-turbines-Queensland-NSW-killing-rare-Aussie-wildlife

SBS News - Wind-turbines-killing-endangered-birds

SMH - Absolutely-incorrect-the-evidence-is-in-on-whales-and-offshore-wind-farms

The Australian - Meet-the-farmer-who-says-his-sheep-do-better-on-solar-farms

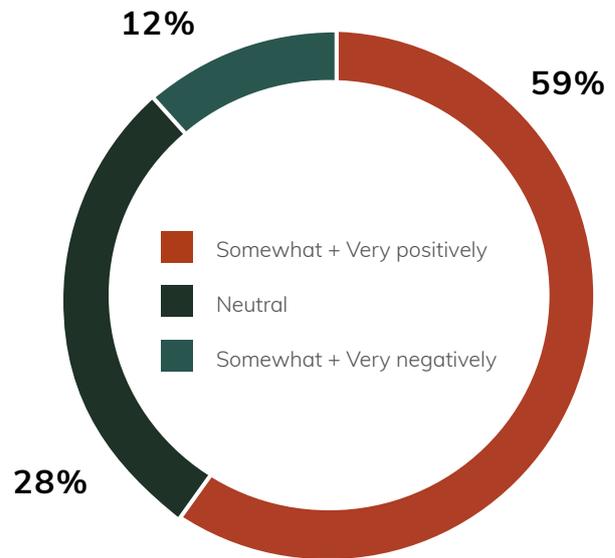# The benefits created by renewable energy projects are not clear

The communications breakdown in the renewables industry is plain to see.

While 59 per cent of Australians believe renewable projects will have a positive impact on their community, many Australians struggle to see the tangible benefits that renewable energy can deliver. However, as noted, perceived benefits reflect desired benefits, so the communications opportunity for renewables proponents is clear.
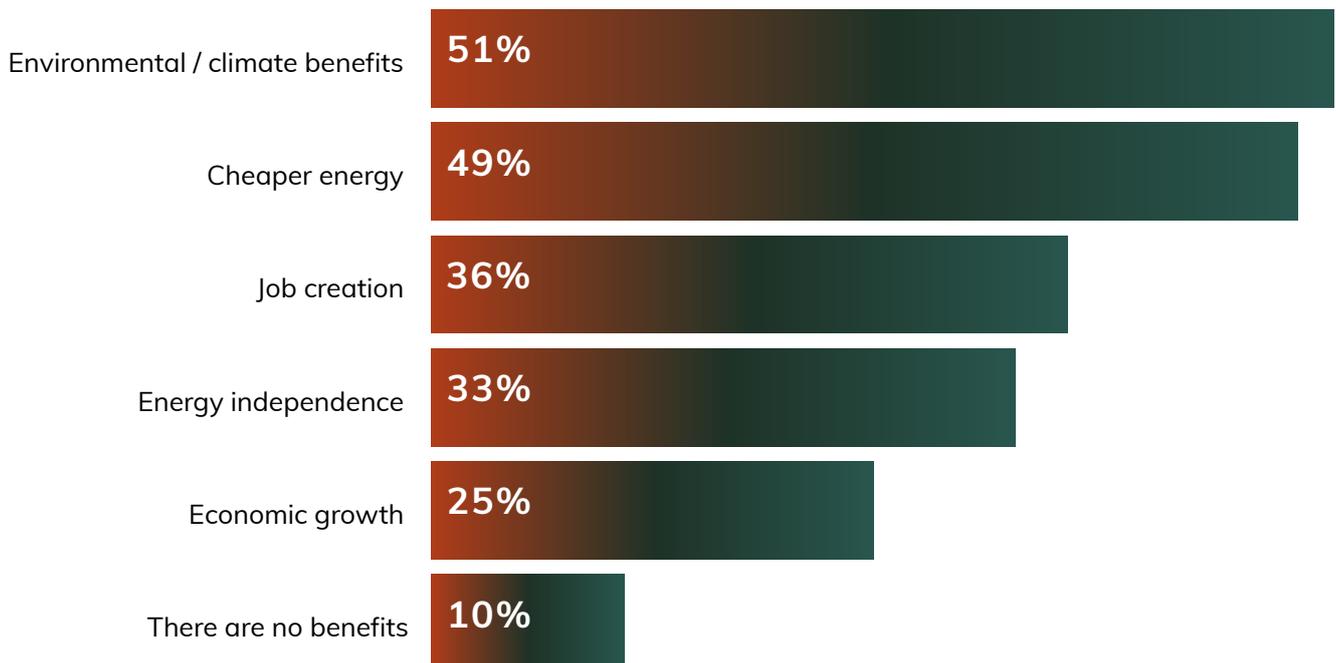
Of the top five perceived benefits cited – three were financial – cheaper energy (49 per cent) job creation (36 per cent), and economic growth (25 per cent).

New projects should provide all these benefits for local communities, but they require deep consultation in the lead-up to a project to understand what communities want and need and how best to give them a "piece of the action" as well as other benefits. There is no one-size fits all approach to these opportunities.

Percieved impact of renewable energy projects

12%

59%

28%

- Somewhat + Very positively
- Neutral
- Somewhat + Very negatively

Percieved benefits of renewable energy projects

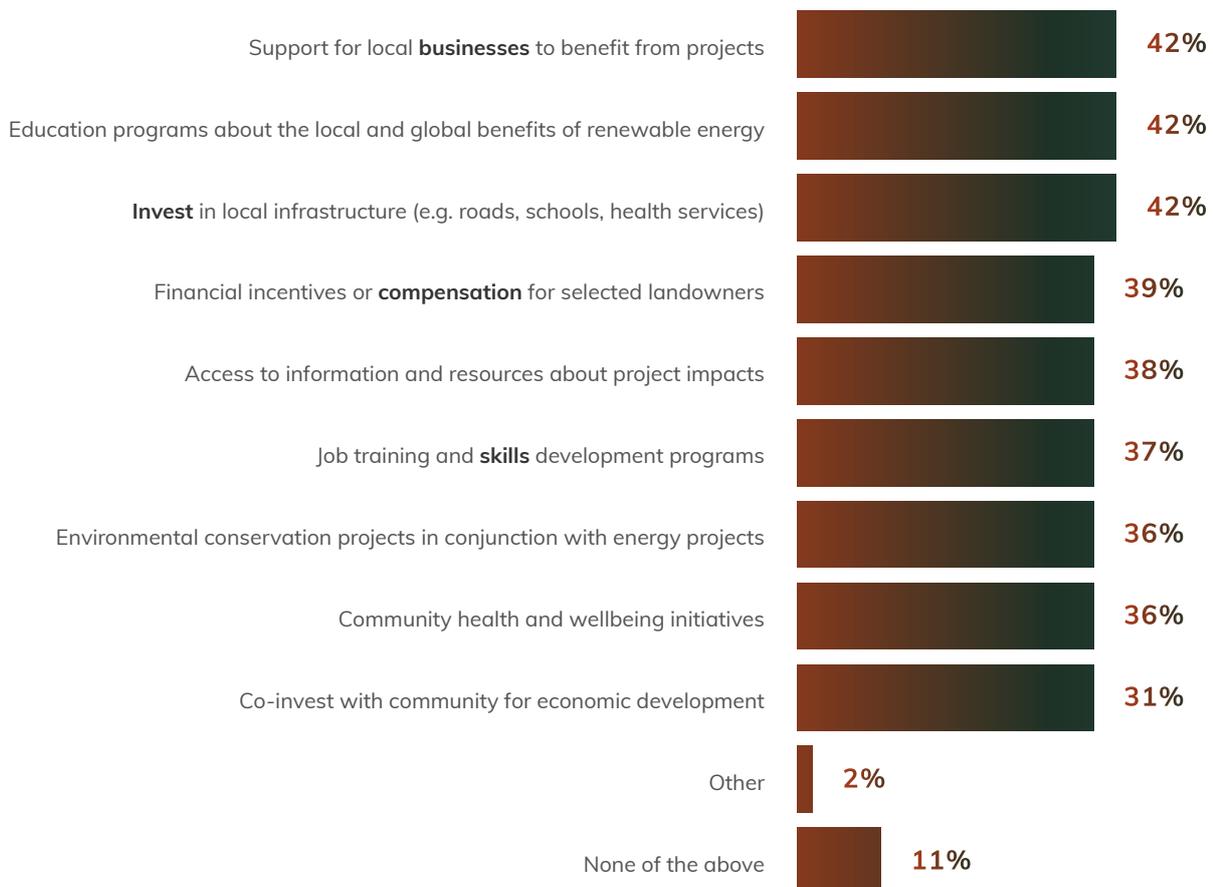|	
Environmental / climate benefits	51%
Cheaper energy	49%
Job creation	36%
Energy independence	33%
Economic growth	25%
There are no benefits	10%

Invest with communities

As noted above, local communities expect tangible benefits in return for local renewable energy projects, in the same way that other industries such as mining have offered for years. Financial compensation and investment in local communities are key factors in building stronger relationships with regional areas.

This sort of proactive approach likely avoids a false economy – by providing community benefits, renewable developers can avoid months or years of costly delays or even cancellation of projects due to entrenched community resistance.

Regional communities feel that they already provide the food and fibre for the nation, and now they are being asked to provide critical minerals and energy for the nation's transition to a low-carbon future… without receiving much in return.

Local communities don't just want economic benefits – "crumbs" decided for them and offered by city corporates — they want to understand the broader benefits and have a direct influence over where these benefits flow in their community.

How renewable energy companies can improve their relationship with communities

Support for local **businesses** to benefit from projects	42%
Education programs about the local and global benefits of renewable energy	42%
Invest in local infrastructure (e.g. roads, schools, health services)	42%
Financial incentives or **compensation** for selected landowners	39%
Access to information and resources about project impacts	38%
Job training and **skills** development programs	37%
Environmental conservation projects in conjunction with energy projects	36%
Community health and wellbeing initiatives	36%
Co-invest with community for economic development	31%
Other	2%
None of the above	11%

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Local communities feel left out of local projects

Despite strong support for renewable energy across Australia, 79 per cent of the regional Australians who are aware of projects in their region have never been invited to participate in discussions about them. This lack of engagement highlights a key communication gap between renewable energy proponents and the communities they impact.

Invited to participate in community meetings or consultations

21%

79%

■ Yes, I have   ■ No, I have not
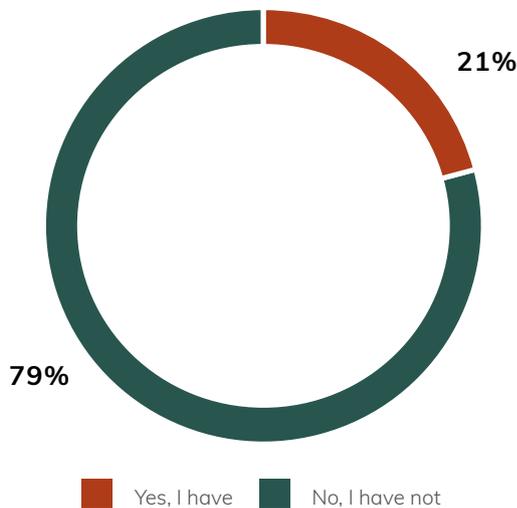
Too often, renewables operators do seek to provide community benefits, but do not consult communities, and so the benefits they offer (which come at a cost to them) do not achieve the outcome they desire.

When asked how companies and governments could improve relationships with local areas, two of the top five responses were about access to information:

- 42 per cent of people called for education programs on the benefits of renewable projects.
- 38 per cent wanted more information about the projects and their impacts.

When asked how companies can improve their relationship with local areas, regional people cited relevant, localised community benefits:

- 42 per cent of respondents cited support for local businesses.
- 42 per cent pointed to investments in infrastructure.
- 39 per cent highlighted financial incentives or compensation for selected landowners.
- 37 per cent supported job training and skills development programs.

However, two of the top five responses were a plea for information to help local communities understand the benefits of this infrastructure. "Education programs about the local and global benefits of renewable energy" was the second-highest response (42 per cent) and "access to information and resources about project impacts" was supported by 38 per cent of respondents.

Local communities are asking for more information – it's up to developers and governments to provide it in a way that engages and empowers communities.

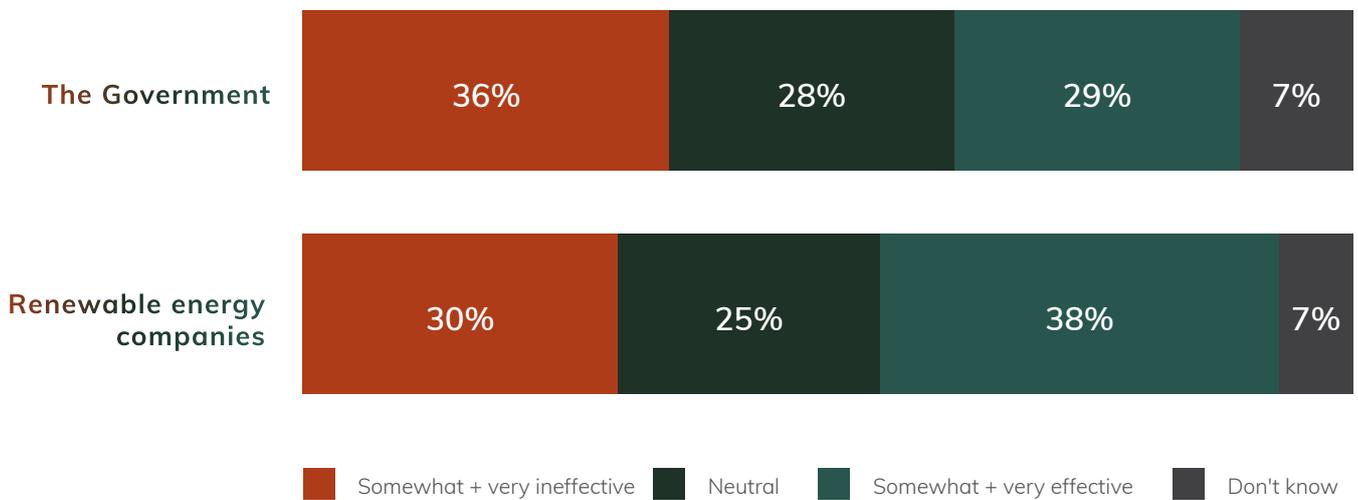### Level of community involvement in the decision-making process

9%

29%

62%

■ Somewhat + Very   ■ Not very + Not at all   ■ Don't know
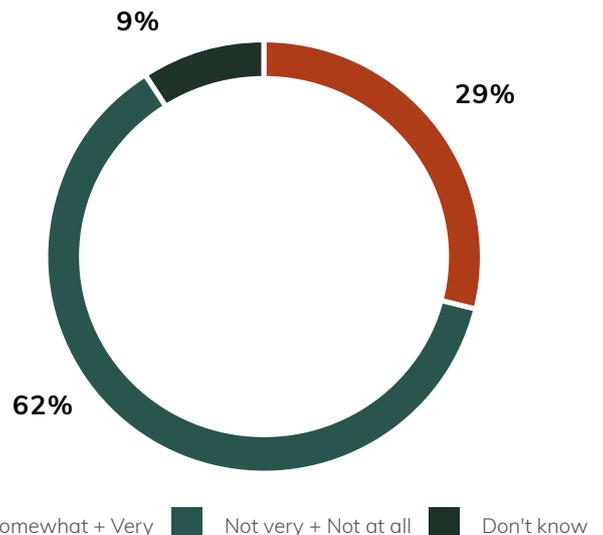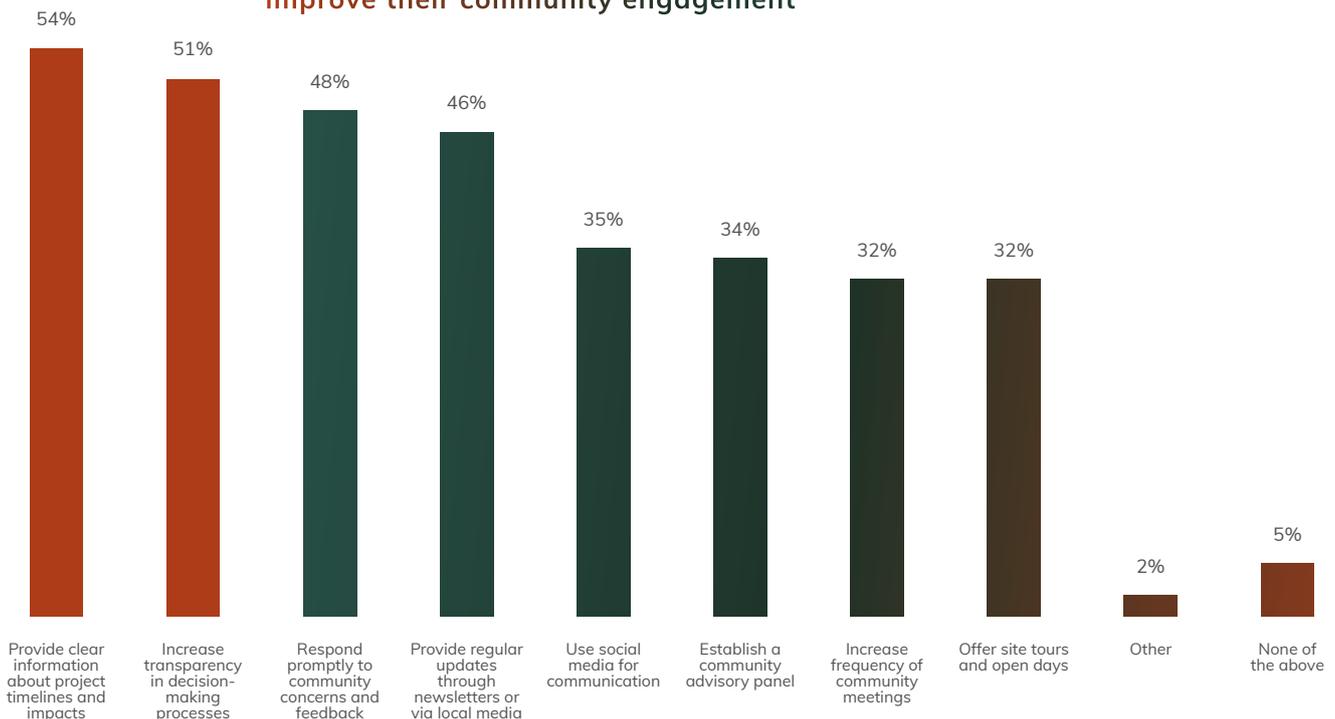
Engagement and communication needs to improve

Private renewable energy companies are perceived as performing better in engaging the public on renewable energy initiatives compared to government.

When asked how effective communication and engagement efforts have been in their region or community, 64 per cent of respondents rated the government as "somewhat" or "very" ineffective. In contrast, private companies fared slightly better, with 55 per cent of respondents viewing their efforts as ineffective.

Effectiveness of communication by... regarding renewable energy projects

	Somewhat + very ineffective	Neutral	Somewhat + very effective	Don't know
The Government	36%	28%	29%	7%
Renewable energy companies	30%	25%	38%	7%

Legend: ■ Somewhat + very ineffective ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat + very effective ■ Don't know

How renewable energy companies & government could improve their community engagement

Category	Value
Provide clear information about project timelines and impacts	54%
Increase transparency in decision-making processes	51%
Respond promptly to community concerns and feedback	48%
Provide regular updates through newsletters or via local media	46%
Use social media for communication	35%
Establish a community advisory panel	34%
Increase frequency of community meetings	32%
Offer site tours and open days	32%
Other	2%
None of the above	5%

What does all this mean?

Australians are ready for a clean energy future

The research is clear: contrary to popular belief, Australians — including regional Australians — are supportive of renewable energy. Regional Australians are just as eager as their metro counterparts to embrace renewables, debunking the myth that rural communities are a barrier to progress.

Disinformation is working — and information is crucial to counter misconceptions

Misleading information is fuelling resistance and misplaced fears about renewable energy. This is a challenge that the sector must address head-on by providing accurate, timely information to counteract the disinformation campaign.

Australians want clarity. There's a clear demand for more proactive, transparent communication about the benefits and impacts of renewables in their local areas, which should also include information about the successful rollout of thousands of projects across the nation. Companies and governments must step up their education efforts to build trust and foster stronger relationships with communities.

Local, relevant economic benefits matter

Three of the top five public concerns about renewables reflect financial incentives, showing that Australians want to see direct economic benefits associated with the perceived costs of implementing renewable energy projects in their local areas. This underscores the importance of showcasing the economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure investments that renewables can bring to local communities. Along with the need to consult to ensure the community feels ownership of how these economic benefits are administered.

Early engagement with regional communities can bridge the perception gap

The gap between public perception and reality offers an opportunity for the renewable energy sector to better engage communities. By focusing on shared values like economic opportunity, drought-proofing and sustainability for local communities — and by addressing myths — companies can foster deeper local support for renewable projects. Early engagement with local communities is vital — they are the key stakeholder in shaping a clean energy future.

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What can proponents do?

It's time to shift our focus from the bare minimum – social license – to something with a positive outcome: "community growth".

Real, lasting, relevant community benefits can drive enthusiastic community endorsement – not just begrudging permission.

This is the foundation of our engagement model for renewable energy projects. Building community endorsement involves more than gaining passive acceptance – it requires active support and ownership from local communities. Here's how we can achieve this through our engagement framework:

1 **Listen to local communities, and tailor engagement accordingly**

Giving local communities skin in the game in decision-making fosters ownership and reduces opposition. Establishing landowner or community reference groups with real authority and good governance ensures projects are mutually beneficial, rather than imposed.

A one-size-fits-all approach won't work. Successful engagement must be flexible and localised, addressing the unique concerns of each community.

Sponsoring the footy club will not cut it.

Authentic dialogue and accountability are key to earning trust and long-term collaboration.

2 **Shout about successful projects and partner with government and local groups**

All levels of governments, energy companies, the renewable energy industry, developers and communities need to share stories of successful projects – from research to realisation. Partnering with local councils to deliver consistent and transparent messaging can prevent perceptions of being profit-driven and builds trust with the community.

From the outset, communications campaigns in local communities must lead with the size and scale of the successful transition to renewables that is already underway. "Get on board with everyone else" rather than "try something new and untested".

3 **Close the communication gap**

Australians are asking for more information about renewable projects. Companies and governments must fill this gap by clearly communicating the community, environmental and economic benefits of projects and outline how they reflect what the community told them they care about.

By providing transparent, early-stage information and education, proponents can counter misinformation and increase community support.

4

Lead with local evidence and correct false narratives

Showcasing regional data and success stories is essential to show the tangible benefits of renewable projects, such as contributing to local sustainability and economic growth. At the same time, disinformation about renewable energy is rampant and misinformation spreads fast. Renewable companies must proactively counter disinformation with accurate, evidence-based information.

These myths are entrenched now, so we cannot ignore them and hope for the best. Companies need to proactively address myths around wildlife, agricultural impacts, and health concerns. By countering these false narratives with facts and case studies, they can shift public perception in favour of renewables.

5

Showcase real economic benefits

Renewable companies must emphasise the economic advantages they bring to local communities. From compensating landowners to creating jobs and funding infrastructure, demonstrating the long-term value of renewable projects can win over sceptical communities and frankly, appeal to self-interest. Focusing on common goals and demonstrating positive-sum outcomes fosters collaboration and strengthens local support.

6

Commit to long-term engagement

Gaining community trust takes time. Renewable projects must commit to ongoing communication, listening to local feedback, and ensuring that community benefits are relevant and remain central to the project's success. There is no set and forget. Sustainable support comes from a genuine, long-term investment in local prosperity.

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Porter Novelli's Community Growth Model

Establishing renewable energy projects involves a mandatory regulatory process, but it's often complex and can hinder community engagement. A complementary approach is needed to build trust and ownership within local communities.

Porter Novelli's Community Growth Model aims to do just that, following four key stages: prepare, define, invest, and enact. Throughout each stage, **we engage, listen to, and communicate with local people.**

Engage • Listen • Communicate

Engage

· Explore matters impacting community

· Map community leaders, risks mitigation

· Narrow-cast engagement with community leaders

Define

· Soft outreach to landholders

· Establish Community Reference Group

· Explore and define future state for the community

· Analyse impacts and benefits

· Develop community and stakeholder engagement plan

· Create source of truth

Invest

· Roll out community and stakeholder engagement plan

· Set out case for the project and how it will contribute to future state

· Facilitate community projects/programs

· Transparent engagement on project composition

Enact

· Continued transparent engagement on project composition/rollout out

· Continued facilitation of community benefit program

· Issues and crisis management

· Reporting

| Strategy and scoping | Assessments and studies | Exhibition and submission | Project determination | Development |

Regulatory process

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Porter Novelli's Community Growth Model

Engage

Every community is unique. Before starting any project, it's essential to understand the local region's characteristics, aspirations, needs, and challenges. Only then can developers create projects that provide meaningful and relevant benefits to the entire community.

This means:

- Understanding the community: Conduct a thorough socioeconomic analysis of the region, including potential engagements and partnerships for the short and long-term.

- Mapping stakeholders: Identify key stakeholders such as individuals, groups, businesses, organisations and networks and assess potential risks.

- Narrow-cast engagement: Quietly reach out to local leaders, councils, and groups to understand their views of the region. While open about potential projects, this engagement focuses on exploring opportunities for constructive collaboration, not the project itself.

Invest

With relationships in place, the focus shifts to delivering on commitments and building trust. This involves:

- Implementing the engagement plan: Rollout the community and stakeholder engagement plan, adapting and evaluating progress and managing issues and risks.

- Supporting community projects: Invest in and launch community programs through the CRG — transparently documenting and evaluating the impact.

- Making the case for the project: Show how the project aligns with the region's future goals.

- Transparent engagement: Maintain open communication throughout the project development process, sharing updates and progress reports at key milestones.

Define

This stage is about building strong relationships and setting up frameworks for collaboration. It requires upfront investment and a commitment to define the future for the proponent and the community to work towards. It includes:

- **Developing a community and stakeholder engagement plan:** Develop a strategy for ongoing engagement.

- **Soft engagement with landowners:** Begin transparent conversations about potential projects and investment in the region. Gauge general support for collaborative discussions about the future and the potential role of a project.

- **Establishing a Community Reference Group (CRG)**: Collaborate with councils and locals to form a group that play a central role in shaping and supporting potential projects or initiatives within the region. Explore co-investment opportunities in shared business ventures that align with the community's goals and potential development outcomes (e.g., energy for local processing, shared equity arrangements).

- **Defining the future:** The CRG helps outline a shared vision for the region's future and explores projects that could support that vision. Conduct a comprehensive impact and benefits analysis to inform project and initiative options.

- I**nformation hub:** Develop an online hub for the project, which in time will house all assets for project.

Enact

The final stage is about delivering on promises and maintaining transparency. This includes:

- Ongoing engagement: Keep the community informed at key milestowes.

- Continued support: Deliver on community benefit programs.

- Issues and crisis management: Address any issues that arise with open communication.

- Evaluation and reporting: Regularly track and report progress through the CRG and public platforms.

Each phase is overseen by our leadership, ensuring quality and accountability throughout the project.

About the Winds of Change: Regional Australians' Real Views on Renewables research

Communications firm Porter Novelli Australia, in partnership with Quantum Market Research, has conducted research to understand Australian's perspectives on renewable energy projects.

The study involved an online survey of n=2001 Australians aged 18 and above, conducted from 8 to 26 August 2024. The collected data was adjusted to ensure a nationally representative sample.

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About Porter Novelli Australia

At Porter Novelli, we shape your story and make it count.

Porter Novelli is a thriving communications firm known for smart, creative and unexpected communication. We work with corporations, governments and not-for-profits to build attention, influence behaviour, enhance reputation and mitigate risk.

While we're in the business of public relations, we have evolved our communications practice with more than 30 consultants, writers, designers, corporate affairs practitioners, brand experts and publicists in Melbourne and Sydney.

We shape your story with evidence, and we commit to strategy first. We listen and ask questions before we offer counsel. We make our work count in a way that can be measured by its positive impact on your organisation.

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About Quantum Market Research

Quantum Market Research is a full-service Social and Market Research agency that helps change-makers in business, government and philanthropy across a range of sectors make better decisions. Our work is grounded in a deep understanding of human behaviour, social sciences, advanced analytics and over 25 years of tracking culture change in Australia. The Quantum approach applies big picture thinking to every brief, no matter how targeted or unique, arming clients with the knowledge and understanding about people to drive insightful and meaningful decisions.

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