Engaging households towards the Future Grid:
A strategy for the energy sector

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Expert Panel

- Robert Simpson – Ausgrid
- Catherine Gip and Stephanie Judd – AusNet Services
- Neil Horrocks – University of Queensland
- Emma O’Neill – Victorian Council of Social Services
- Wayne Pales – Independent
- Dean Lombard – Renew
- Lynne Gallagher and Jim Wellsmore – Energy Consumers Australia
The Future Grid

- Increasing distributed energy resources (DER)
- For households…
  - technologies such as rooftop solar PV systems and battery storage
  - automated control of hot water systems, pool pumps, smart appliances or air conditioning
  - demand response programs
  - micro-grids
  - new market arrangements and increasing third party platforms and vendors

‘I would say the future grid is what we’re transitioning towards and we have no certainty what it will look like’ (Regulatory/ government org)
Future Grid Homes project

**Stage 1: Research with households**
- experiencing engagement types expected as part of the Future Grid
- early adopters, demand management participants, households with blackout experiences

**Stage 2: Energy stakeholder interviews**, plus
- analysis of consumer engagement and demand management materials
- literature review of best practice engagement
- review of engagement in other related sectors (policing, water, waste, bushfire management)

**Stage 3: Development of an engagement strategy** for the sector
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
The Engagement Strategy

- The Strategy responds to the need for differentiated, flexible and inclusive approaches in Future Grid

- The Strategy is intended for the energy sector and associated stakeholders, specifically:
  - electricity retailers and distributors
  - energy policy makers, governance bodies, market operators and regulators, and
  - third-party providers or other market participants.
Elements of strategy

- Framing and appeals
- Relationships
- Principles
Principles

- Affordable, clean electricity from the grid
- Accessible, flexible and dependable new energy technologies and arrangements
- Appeal to broader household interests and concerns
- Simplicity up front
- Act to build trust in the sector as a whole
- Genuine conversations with households
- Diversity as progress
- Opportunities to participate, not obligations
- Early adopters as partners
- Durable policy, planning and partnerships
PROGRAM EXAMPLES
‘Vari-Grid’

A national communication campaign to engage households in grid issues and raise awareness of electricity’s variability
‘Weather WATTchers’

Linking electricity grid demand with weather forecasts
‘Future Grid Partners’

A program to engage adopters of solar, batteries, EVs…
‘Fair Air’

A nationally-coordinated Direct Load Control (DLC) program for air conditioners
“Splash and Dash’
Community splash park
IMPLEMENTATION
Delivering a coordinated household engagement strategy in Australia

- best led by a central coordinated body and/or driven by an organisation within the energy sector
- unable to identify a single suitable organisation to lead delivery of the Strategy (finding and limitation of this research)
  - multiple (and conflicting) suggestions from industry stakeholders
  - structure of Australia’s energy sector and divided responsibilities does not currently support coordinated household engagement

- supported by long term climate and energy plan and policy?

‘I think there’s a few bodies that are trying to provide that national voice. But it’s very hard just given the polies [politics] of energy and climate for anyone to cut through. … There’s just so much change driven by technology and policy, it’s hard for anyone to really have a nationally dominant or consistent voice.’ (Regulatory/ government organisation)
Thank you

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Download the household research report and engagement strategy from: http://www.futuregridhomes.net/