

Waikato Affordable Energy Webinar Series

June-November 2026



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

To View This Webinar On Line, Click on the Image Below





Harvey Brookes
Executive Director
Wellbeing Waikato



Reflections: Ernie Newman,
Independent Competition Expert
and Commentator



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Wellbeing Waikato



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

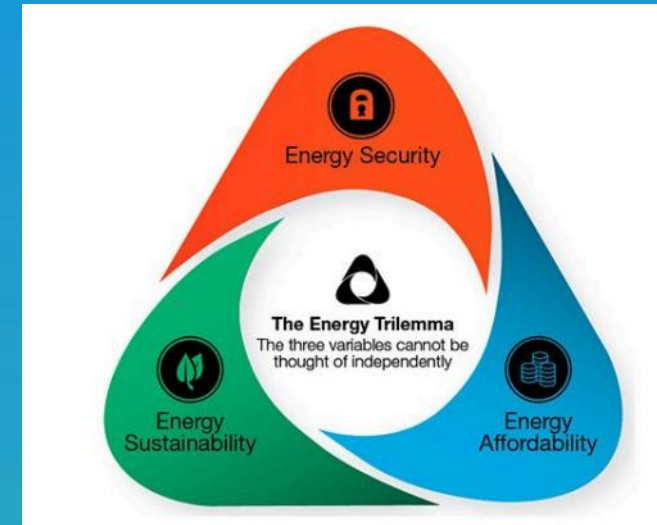
Independent Charitable Trust focused on:

- Regional intelligence about what's most important to households and whanau
- Identifying emerging risks early
- Surfacing underlying drivers, not just symptoms
- Convening government, iwi, councils, community organisations and the private sector around decision-useful insights.



Energy systems need to be:

- Affordable
- Reliable
- Sustainable



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

4 Big Questions

1. How does the electricity system actually work—and why is it designed this way?
2. What drives power prices, and how could they be made more affordable?
3. How does energy affordability affect household and community wellbeing?
4. What would a better system look like—and how do we get there?

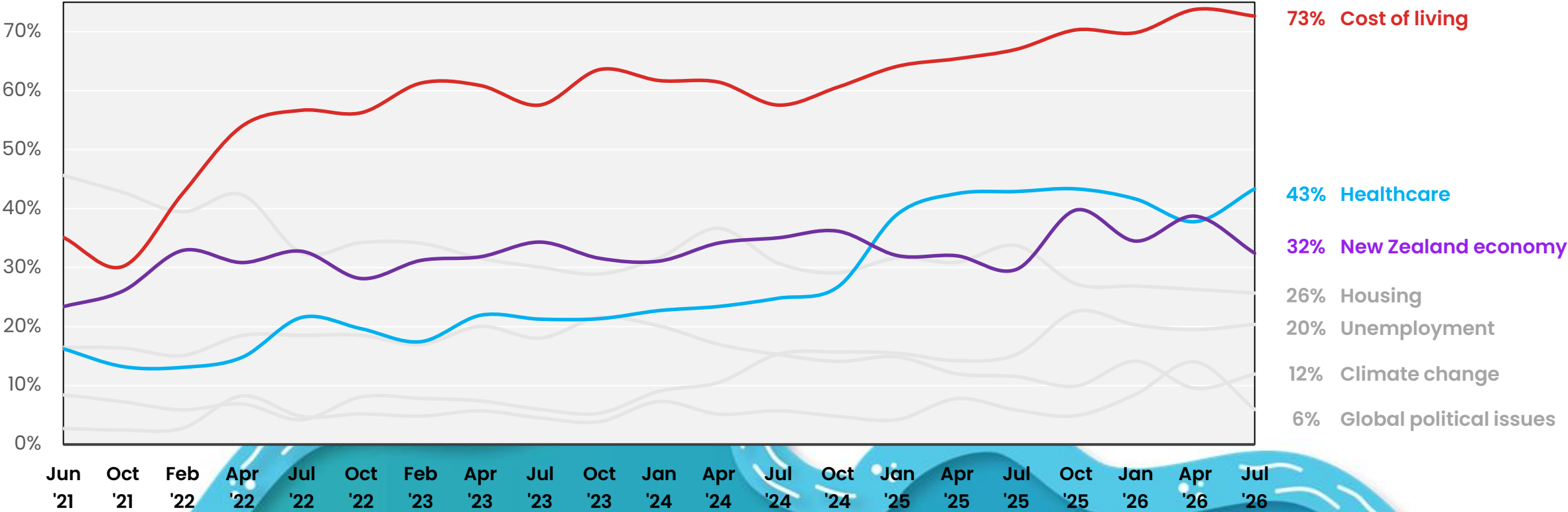


**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Consumer NZ: Cost of living remains the top concern, as economic worries ease and healthcare climbs

Most concerning issues New Zealand is currently facing

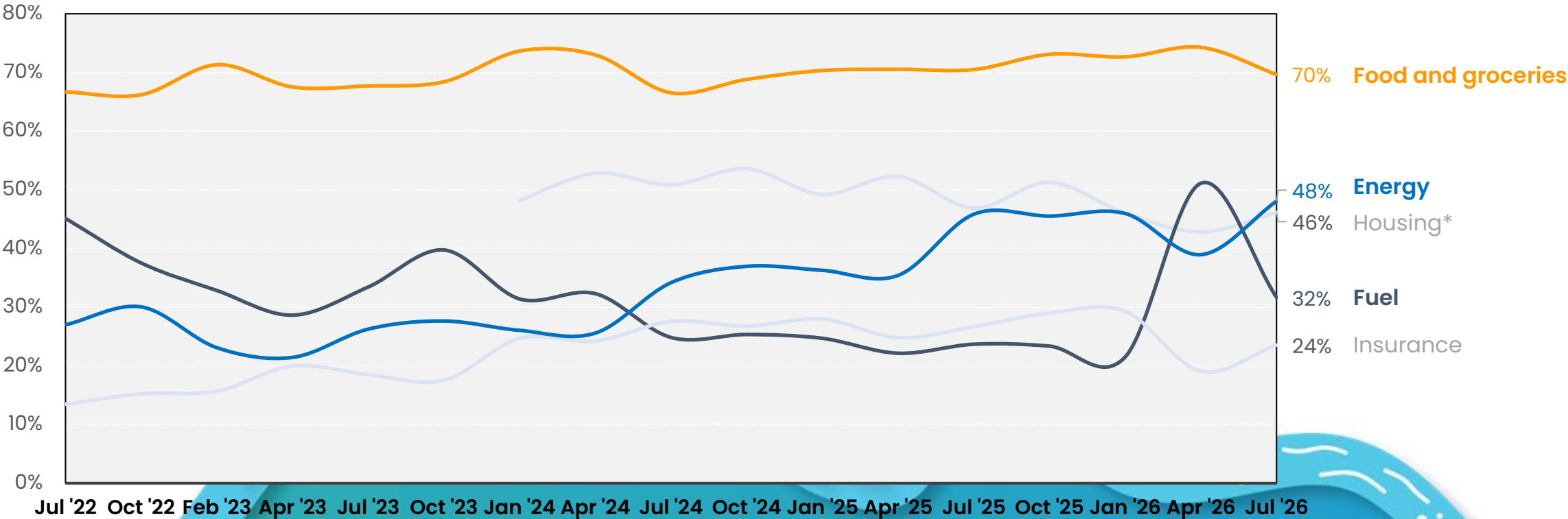


Source: Consumer NZ Sentiment Tracker. Q. Which three of the following do you believe are the most urgent or concerning issues for New Zealand right now? Please select up to three. Results show the proportion who selected each issue in their top three. Not all issues are shown.

Consumer NZ: Groceries remain the biggest pressure, energy hit a new winter high, and fuel concern falls sharply from April's spike

Biggest financial concerns over the next 12 months

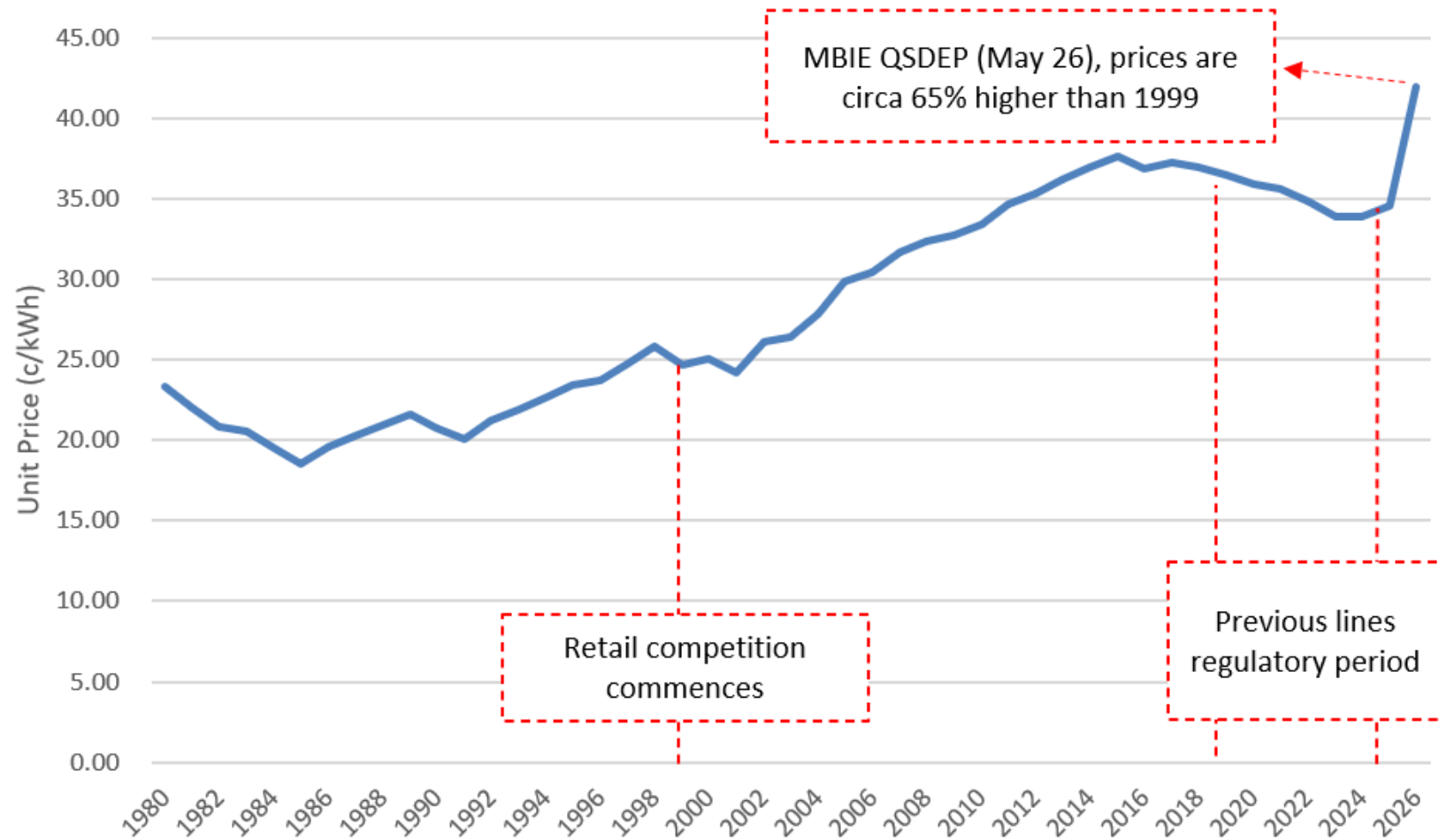
(Prevalence: % who ranked each concern in the top three)



Source: Consumer NZ Sentiment Tracker. Q. Which of the following expenses are your biggest financial concerns over the next 12 months? Please rank up to three options. Results show the proportion who ranked each expense in their top three. Note: methodology changed in January 2024. Not all financial concerns are shown.

New Zealand Residential Electricity Prices (Real)

Date source: MBIE



Mercury profit jumps to \$321 million as its boss promises smaller power price rises

August 18, 2026

Mercury Energy has reported a net profit of \$321 million for the year to 30 June 2026, up from just \$1 million the year before, and its chief executive has told analysts the company expects residential power price rises to sit at or below inflation over the next few years.

The result, released to the NZX on Tuesday morning, was driven largely by water. Strong inflows into the Waikato catchment lifted Mercury's hydro generation by 31 percent, and total output across its fleet rose to 9,070 gigawatt hours from 7,906 the year before. Revenue fell to \$3 billion on the previous year.

Home / New Zealand

Genesis Energy announces record profits

 **NZ Herald**
24 Feb, 2026 07:09 AM

 Save  Share

News / Business 26 February 2026, 9:10am

Is it fair that prices rise as power companies bank profits?

 **Susan Edmunds**
Money Correspondent



Home / Business / Companies / Energy

Meridian Energy returns to \$130m profit after drought-hit loss, promises to keep energy price increases below inflation in coming year



Jamie Gray
Business Reporter

NZ Herald · 26 Aug, 2026 09:25 AM · 3 mins to read

 Follow author



Wellbeing Waikato
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

What Happens When Power Becomes Affordable for a Family: Five Years of Watching it Happen



Rob Johnson
Ezra Hirawani
Founders: Nau Mai Ra



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

THE WAIKATO AFFORDABLE ENERGY CHALLENGE • WEBINAR SERIES

Nau Mai Rā

What happens when power becomes affordable for a family — five years of watching it happen.

Wednesday 16 September 2026

Power that Cares.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

We send the bill, so we see the whole story

5

years selling power to families other companies turn away

30k+

homes that struggle the most to afford to stay warm and get access to power

900

families we helped through last winter with Transpower and the Whānau Fund

We are the first Māori-owned power company in Aotearoa. Every bill a family pays here helps another family. So what we bring you today is not a survey — it is their meters and their words.

QUESTION 01 • HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

Built for the coldest, darkest night — and families pay for that

120,000 MWh is what the country uses on a winter day

Wind

Hydro, geothermal and gas still carry about 90% of a winter day

Wind gives about 10,000 MWh Solar and batteries give 2,000 at most

The power has to be there the second a family flicks a switch — so keeping all of that standing by for one cold, still night is a big part of what every family pays for.

And on those numbers, solar is not the answer for a long time yet. Solar and batteries have a long way to go to be significant enough to make a difference.

QUESTION 01 · WHAT A FAMILY IS BUYING

Almost none of the bill is a family's to change

About 85% is decided before a family picks anything

15% they can shop for



Electricity Authority price stack. Levies 0.5% not labelled.

When we tell a family to shop around, we are asking them to find savings in one sixth of their bill. That is why so many have stopped trying.

QUESTION 02 • WHAT DRIVES THE PRICE

No one gets measured on making a family's power cheaper

Everyone minds their patch

Every company in the chain has to look after itself and make a return. None of them is asked what happened to the family's bill.

Big buyers get the good price

Buy a lot of power and you get a deal. A family buys one house at a time, so nobody bargains for them.

Families stopped believing

They do not switch because they have learned it barely changes the bill. On the numbers, they are right.

WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE DONE FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Cut the tax

Buy power in bulk

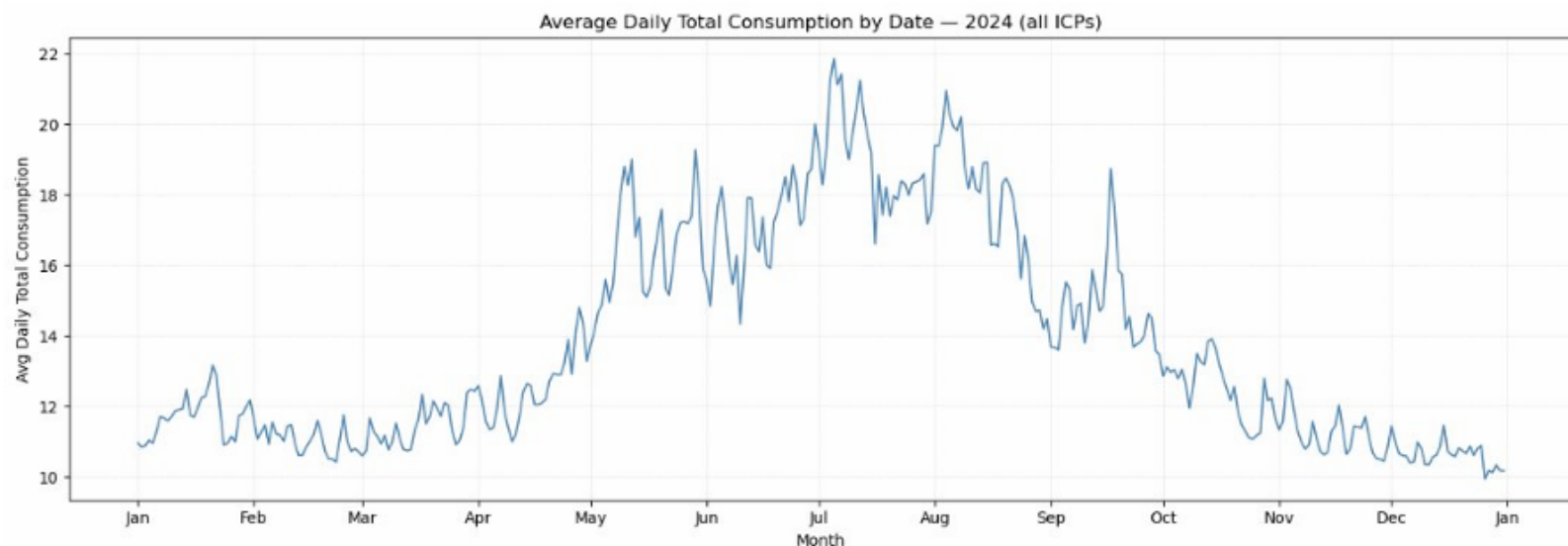
Pay for solar on roofs

None of that is a market accident. Those are choices, and we could make them here.

QUESTION 03 • FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

Our families already use less power than the average home

What our families used each day through 2024



The official line

MBIE considers a normal average about 22 kWh a day. Our families average around 15.

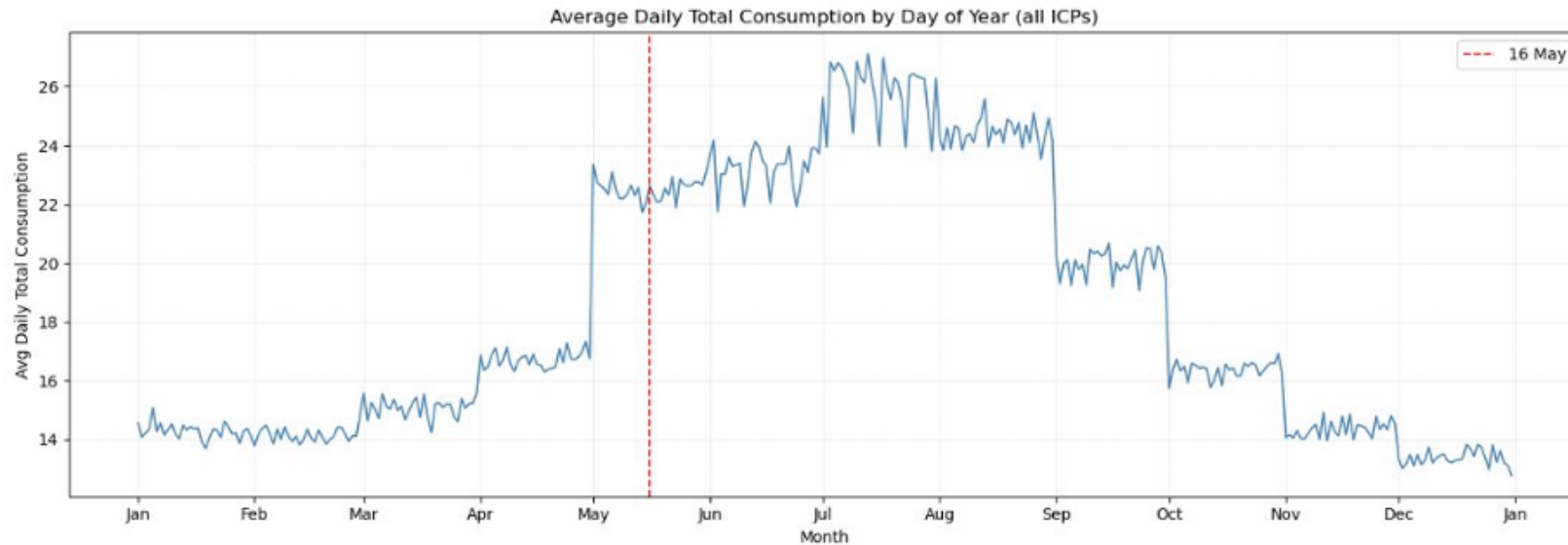
And their homes are colder and damper than average, with more tamariki in them.

They are not being clever with power. They are going without it — and it shows up as a cough, a chest infection, a day off school.

QUESTION 03 · FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

When the money arrived, the heaters went on

Families on winter credits — the dashed line is when the money started landing



Use jumped within days, held all winter, then dropped when the help stopped. Nothing else changed.

Families always knew how to keep warm. They just could not afford to.

QUESTION 03 • FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

\$345 bought one family a warm winter

3,493

people in 900 homes, most with kids

88%

said their home was warmer and drier

83%

said they felt better in themselves

\$345

was the average winter credit per family

“My life is easier. We now sleep in bedrooms and not the lounge. My mental health has improved and the kids have less colds.”

A FAMILY OF FOUR • TRANSPower AND WHĀNAU FUND IMPACT REPORT, 2024-25

In Tokoroa we visited 210 homes in three weeks. Those families are expected to save \$124,000 — about \$589 each.

If families were nocturnal, power would be cheap

2am

Power is cheap, the lines are empty — and the whole family is asleep.

6pm

Dinner, showers, heaters, homework — the most expensive hour of the day.

So stop telling families to use less. Tell them what each hour costs, pay them when they shift, and sell them more power at a smaller margin.

Hot water overnight

Washing off-peak

Charging late

The yearly bill comes down, the house gets warmer, and the company still grows — because it sells more power, not dearer power.

The cost of fixing this is smaller than people think

\$25m

**a year would take about 30,000
families out of power poverty**

— if it arrives in winter, when families actually
come unstuck.

Support the help in winter

Most families manage the rest of the year. Targeted support for each household — financial and wrap-around — works.

Support the companies families already trust to grow

Four small retailers have looked after these families for years. You do not need new answers. Back and amplify what you hear today from the families we support.

Aim the money

Payments spread across everyone miss the families in the deepest trouble. The same money, aimed, does far more.

WHAT WE WOULD PUT IN YOUR REPORT

Three things families have already told us

01

We do not need another study.
Pull the family voice together
and act on it.

02

Cheaper power lives in the 85%
of the bill a family cannot touch.
Work there.

03

Help in winter, reward families
for shifting, and let the
companies they trust grow.

NAU MAI RĀ Power that Cares.

Q&A



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

The Affordable Energy Webinar Series

June-November 2026



John Campbell, Our Energy
23 September

Use same link as this webinar to join back in.



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Upcoming Speakers:

Kelli Pike, Activator for Community Led Zero Waste: GoEco

Gareth Cartwright, Executive Officer: Community Energy Network

Stew Hamilton, CEO of Mercury NZ

David Wilson, Member of Parliament: New Zealand First

Blair Dickie, Principal Strategic Advisor: Waikato Regional Council

30 September

14 October

21 October

28 October

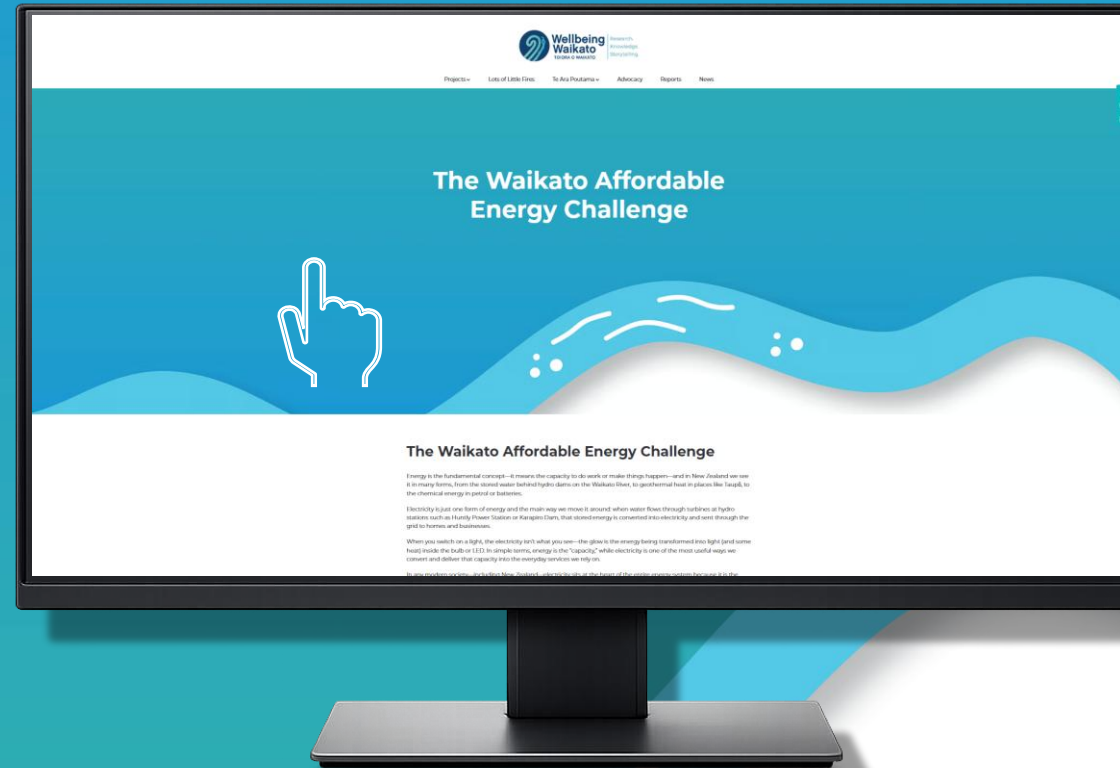
4 November



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Go to our Website to See all Presentations and Slides from the Series:



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

Thank you!

www.wellbeingwaikato.org.nz

harvey@wellbeingwaikato.org.nz

021 913 418



**Wellbeing
Waikato**
TOIORA O WAIKATO

Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.