Household types and energy use

When it comes to using energy at home, the size and composition of our household can make a difference. In this survey snapshot, we start to explore the links between household make-up and patterns of electricity consumption.

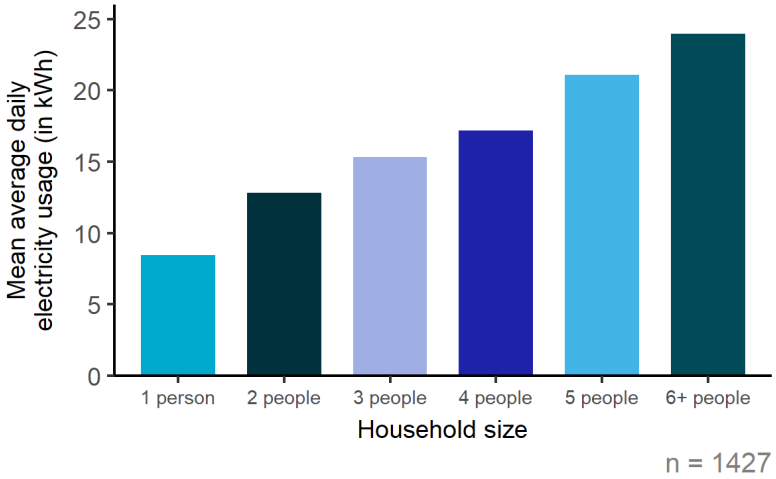
In previous snapshots, we've started to paint a picture of the types of people taking part in our surveys, including the energy sources used by our citizen scientists and the types of dwellings they live in. But what do the households of our citizen scientists look like, and what does this mean for energy use?

Understanding how different household characteristics relate to patterns of energy use can help us piece together more parts of the energy puzzle.

How big are our households?

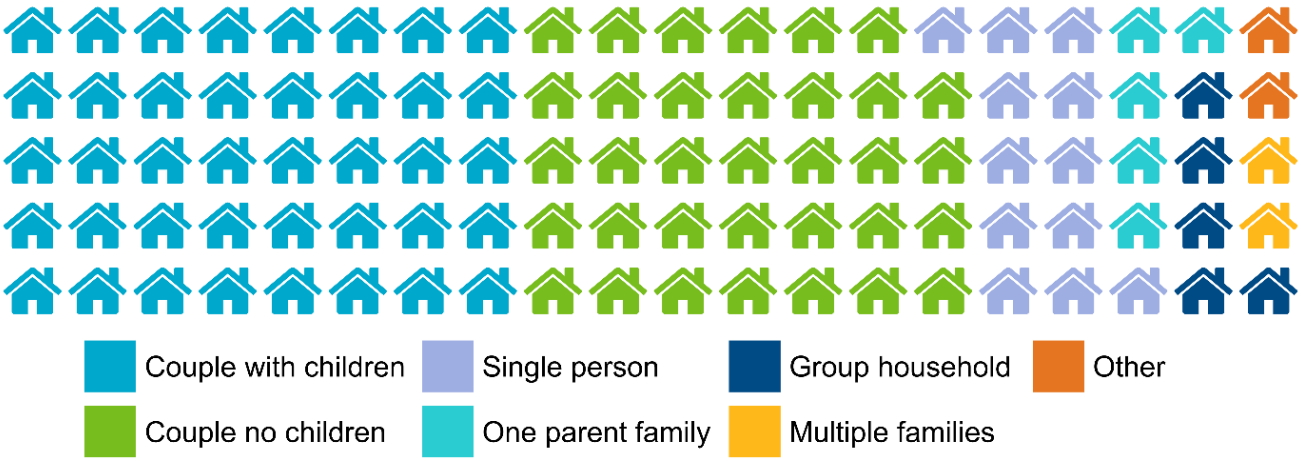
Among our citizen scientists, two-person households seem to be most common (39% of sample), followed by four-person (21%), three-person (18%) and single-person households (13%). The remainder live in households with five or more people.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, household size tends to be correlated with energy use, as more occupants often means greater energy consumption. Indeed, among our sample of citizen scientists, we found that those living in homes with fewer occupants tended to report lower average electricity usage (according to their most recent bill) than those living with more occupants.



What's our household make-up?

How we interact with energy may also vary according to household composition and family make-up. About 40% of our citizen scientists have described their households as couples with children, while around a third are couples without children. Just over one-in-ten reported being single-person households. The remainder include other household types such as one-parent families with children, multiple family households, and group households (e.g. share houses).



In terms of energy-use patterns across different types of households, our surveying found that the mean average daily electricity usage (according to one's latest bill) was:

- highest for multiple family households (20 kWh/day per household) followed by couples with children (17 kWh/day per household).
- lowest for those living in single person households (8 kWh/day per household) and group households (12 kWh/day per household).

To give some context to these results, a kilowatt hour (kWh) is a unit of energy that measures how much electricity has been used. For example, running a 1000 watt (1 kW) appliance like a toaster or microwave continuously for one hour, or leaving a 100 watt incandescent light bulb switched on for 10 hours, would use 1 kWh of electricity.

What does this all mean?

Across the country, our households come in all shapes and sizes – and it's great to see some of this diversity captured among our citizen scientists. Our residential energy use is shaped by various factors, and this naturally includes features of our household and the people we live with. By better understanding how different types of households interact with energy, we can work towards building a better and brighter energy future for all Australians.

Survey snapshots provide a quick look at some of the results provided so far by our citizen scientists

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