

Media Release
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Good “report card” for local lines company

In a recent survey 78.9% of power consumers believed that power cuts in their area had dropped in frequency over the last two years. Less than 2.9% thought power cuts had in fact increased over that period.

This encouraging result, along with many other useful insights into how power consumers view their local lines company’s performance, is the result of a perception survey conducted every two years on behalf of the company. Results are benchmarked against those from the previous two-year period. Around 900 consumers took part in this latest survey, which has a margin of error of + or – 3.3%.

On the “plus” side also was the level of Customer Service satisfaction. Here, 74.5% of consumers surveyed thought they were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the quality of service they were receiving. Interestingly, this result showed a marked improvement in the satisfaction level measured during the 2001 survey, which showed only 58% of consumers were happy with the company’s customer service levels at that time.

Also included in the survey for the first time, were questions about price and value, designed to gauge the level of consumer preparedness to pay a little more in electricity distribution charges (which are included in charges on power accounts) for fewer power cuts. Just over 20% of respondents thought this to be a good idea. Conversely and perhaps not surprisingly, less than 1 in 5 considered they’d be willing to pay a little less in distribution charges and accept more power cuts.

On the “could do better” side of Top Energy’s report card further clarification of the “who does exactly what?” question is required. It’s clear from the results, that there is still some confusion in consumer’s minds about Top Energy’s exact role in the supply of electricity, with some consumers surveyed thinking that the company actually sells electricity.

Said Top Energy Chief Executive, Roger de Bray, “It’s not surprising that there’s still some industry structure confusion – we went through quite radical restructuring a few years back. But I

think people generally understand that Top Energy owns the poles and power lines and that energy retailers like Contact and Empower actually sell them their electricity and use our network to deliver it to their homes.”

The survey also identified a high level of desire to see Top Energy continue to be locally owned and active in the community, with more than 76% of respondents regarding this as being either “Important” or “Very Important”.

Said Mr de Bray, “Overall, we’re pleased with these results. Our people have worked hard to improve the company’s performance across a range of service areas and the responses reflect the fact that consumers recognise improvements are being made. That’s encouraging, but we’ve still got some things to work on too.” END.

Contact: Roger de Bray. Top Energy, Chief Executive. Ph: 0-9 401 5440