

5th Consumer & Industry Wānanga



17 June 2026

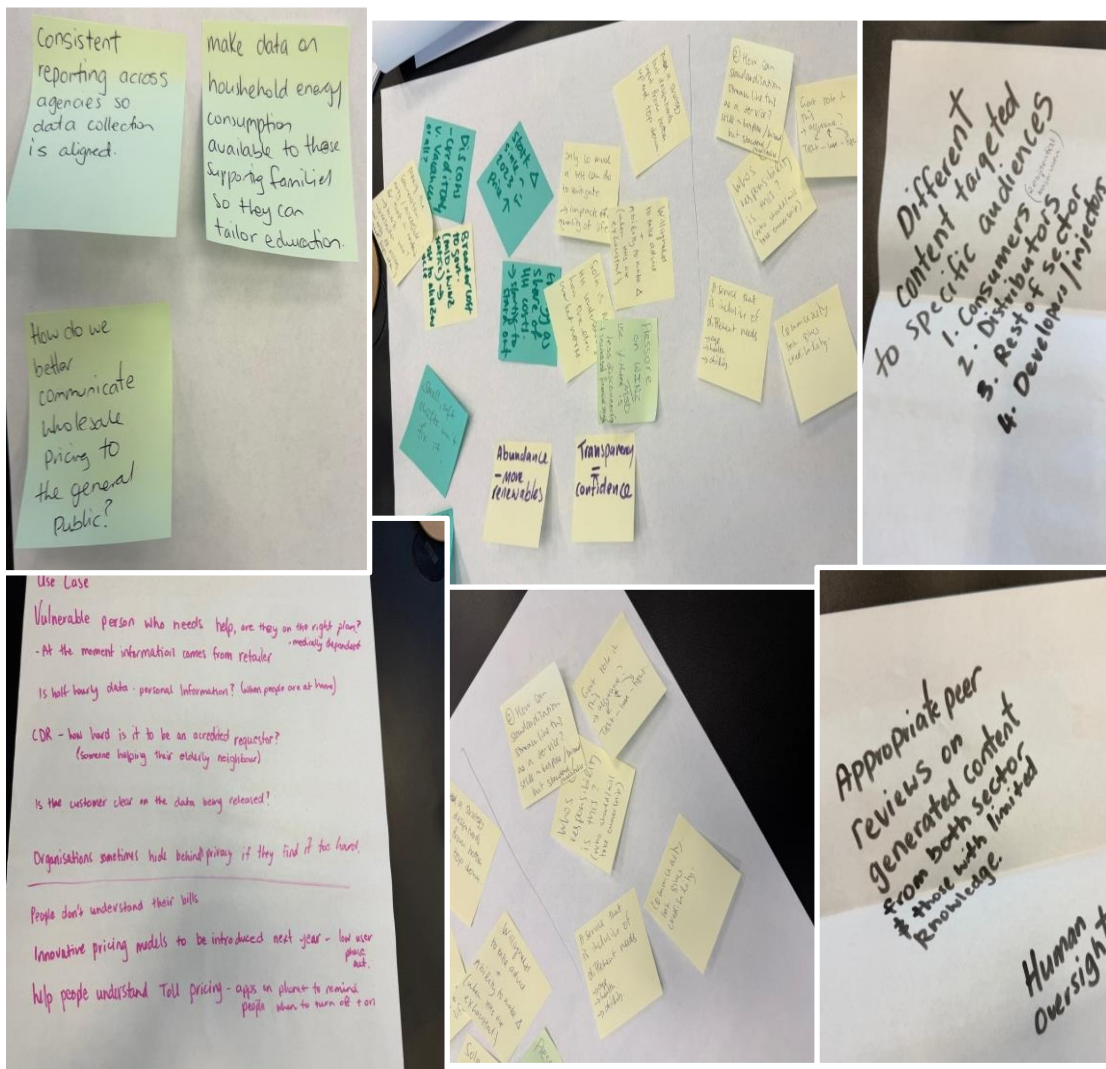
Summary

- The Electricity Authority's fifth Consumer & Industry Wānanga was held on 17 June 2026, with 34 stakeholders and 9 Authority staff supporting.
- The agenda for this wānanga was built primarily in response to two inputs:
 1. requests from participants at previous wānanga events and
 2. outcomes of the various wānanga working groups that had formed with interested participants following the November 2025 event.
- As a result, the wānanga focused on the two key themes throughout the day:
 1. Growing a shared understanding of how the market works:
 - what factors influence pricing
 - what the privacy act enables in terms of retailer/EDB, NGO and consumer collaboration
 3. Identifying opportunities to support consumers to better participate in processes that affect their electricity outcomes:
 - The potential use of AI tools to make it easier for consumers to participate in relevant policy consultations.
 - The most recent consumer data (hardship indicators, disconnection stats etc) from EECA, Consumer NZ, Sea Rottman and the Electricity Authority).
- There was a lot of engagement in the room with the discussion around using AI to summarise technical documents for consumers and NGOs. The discussion included humour at some of the AI hallucinations and caution at its technical inaccuracy, but the intent to simplify technical language and make consultation engagement more accessible was extremely well received. It was also noted NGOs such as CAB play this role on a daily basis and were keen to be utilised more.
- As usual, the final section of the day was kept as an open agenda space for audience members to set key topics of interest they would like to spend time on together. This time the room identified the following three topics which provided the final discussion themes of the day:
 1. Ways to better educate consumers (residential and commercial) to make better use of the tariffs available to them
 2. Planning for a joint EDB-Retailer-community support organisation workshop to template a common OPC authorised information sharing agreement.
 3. Picking up on the quote: "The energy wellbeing network will be 10x better if all stakeholders jointly funded it," the group convened a value discovery discussion to help identify more effective ways to pitch the support request to specific sectors.

Participant feedback

- The Electricity Authority's fifth Consumer & Industry Wānanga was held on 17 June 2026, with 34 external stakeholders and ten Authority staff.
- We received post-event feedback surveys from 16 participants, 13 of whom rated the event 4/5 (6 people) or 5/5 (7 people) stars. One person didn't give a star-rating but gave very positive feedback and one other participant gave a 3-star rating – noting they did so because they missed the first half of the event. This is overwhelmingly positive.
- Participants emphasised the following in the things they liked about the event:
 - The quality and relevance of the sessions (especially the privacy, pricing factors, and consumer research updates)
 - The opportunity to connect with peers and people from other parts of the sector
 - How well the event is co-ordinated and run
 - There was very little substantial feedback regarding potential improvements to the event – the two key suggestions were to be mindful of the level of jargon and technical language that goes with the sector; and to remind people they will have ample opportunity for table discussions and open forum sessions so people can prepare to make the most of that
 - There was one individual that found the day a little loose (ie struggled with the open, crowd-sourced sessions) and couldn't see any logic behind the agenda topics (they missed that these topics emerged from the working groups and connect directly to the previous wānanga).
- The verbatim responses are reproduced in Appendix B

Key outputs from table discussions



- Interestingly in this wānanga, there was much less capture from the table conversations. Participants were extremely engaged in the conversations and dialogue at the tables and much less focused on charting recommended actions for the Authority or additions to the Authority's work programme. This should be seen as a really constructive development: the focus of the wānanga has evolved towards genuine dialogue and exchange, in place of advocacy or recommendations for other agencies. This sets the context for more genuine engagement and collaboration through these forums.
- Some of the key questions and topics that came out of table discussions for further consideration include:
 - How do we better communicate wholesale pricing to the general public?
 - What's involved in becoming an accredited requestor (of consumer data)?
 - There remains an extremely deep interest in the concept of an Energy Wellbeing Network or some similar mechanism for driving and enabling collaboration between NGOs, EDBs, retailers, and others. There's also a question of what the Authority's appropriate role in this potential initiative.

Recommended next steps

- The nature and focus of the table discussions and output from this wānanga doesn't lend itself to a typical list of discrete actions and recommendations.
- However, it remains clear that there is an ongoing desire among stakeholders for opportunities to come together and discuss the key issues canvassed throughout the day – with an aim of finding opportunities to collaborate more effectively for the benefit of consumers.

- The key topics where there is an obvious shared appetite for further collaborative discussion include:
 - Finding the right value pitch for the energy network concept.
 - Finding ways for EDBs, retailers and NGOs to manage privacy and work together when consumers are in need.
 - Ways to better educate consumers (residential and commercial) to benefit from time of use tariffs.
 - Collaborating on a joint EDB-Retailer-community NGO template for a common information sharing agreement that can be authorised with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.
 - An ongoing desire to make consumer engagement in relevant policy setting processes more accessible.
- The Authority could play an enabling role in convening these discussions in numerous ways and formats/platforms. This should be further explored with participants with a range of potential approaches – online forums could be utilised really efficiently between in-person events for these purposes.
- I recommend sharing this report with all participants and inviting interest with sign-up opportunities for future discussions on the above topics.

Carl Billington

July 2026.

Appendix A: Wānanga attendance list

	Name
1	Carol Reed
2	Miranda Struthers
3	Megan Baker
4	Monica Choy
5	Jessica Niemack
6	Jessica Walker
7	Graeme Peters
8	Mitchell Trezona-Lecomte
9	Kalina Shipkov
10	Caroline Shone
11	'Leana Hunt'
12	Brodie Stewart
13	dave.farrell@transpower.co.nz
14	George Ashby
15	Jamie Silk
16	Quentin Caddis
17	Courtanay Gray
18	Phil Squire
19	Gareth Cartwright
20	Sam Elder
21	Idil Kaplan
22	Kate Day
23	Anne - Smart Power
24	Daniel.Pringle@comcom.govt.nz
25	ellarose.goss@gmail.com
26	Victoria.Coad@mbie.govt.nz
27	Zoe Barton-Howes

28	Emma Wenley
29	Dave Farrell
30	Kimberley O'Sullivan
31	'Wayne Anderson'
32	Sabina Bickelmann
33	Michael Kane
34	Sophie – Electric Kiwi

AUTHORITY STAFF	
1	Siobhan Bradley
2	Michael Chapman
3	Jo Goudie
4	Daniel Griffiths
5	Heidi Norman
6	Tama Kirikiri
7	Jono Barnard
8	Andrew Millar
9	Carl Billington (MC)

Appendix B: Verbatim participant feedback submissions (anonymised)

Submitter	Rating	Most liked	To improve	Future Interest	General Comments
A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Keen to be invited to everything. Energy billing specialist. Focus on hidden hardship.	
B	5	Session design allowed for great conversation & thinking. Colour-coded name tags were a great way to identify sectors.	Knowing who is in the room at the start would help (more info on nametags). So many abbreviations and acronyms used without explanation.	Data	
C	4	Hearing questions from other consumer advocates and hearing the EA's responses.		Interested in EA response to credit worthiness/access to electricity work.	Thanks!
D	5	Connecting and hearing sector issues.		Energy hardship conversations.	Just thanks.
E	4	Good and important conversations. Great to make industry connections.	Useful presentations – keep doing more. Invite government officials along to the next one to hear what the issues/barriers are to more targeted help.	CDR and its ability to unlock some of the privacy challenges discussed.	
F	5	Looking for solutions Meeting people and discussing collaborative working.	Do more, meet more often, keep the conversation going.	Education – energy understanding. Working with EA.	Thank you.

G	Unsure	I really value the korero. I also value the want/drive to try and get recommendations and actions out of these wānanga. However, over the last five of these it's evident that's tough.	Unsure. I want to say that more tangible action is needed (so we are not just having the same korero)...but the 'how' is really hard.		Thank you so much for having us today. It is run really well.
H	5	Meeting everyone and finding out what people in other parts of the industry are doing. Finding out what the Authority is up to and all the work underway. Meeting people like me who frequently help me and my clients.	Less acronyms.	Consumer Data Right.	Liked the format with speakers and discussion.
I	4	Great conversations with broad content – the takeaways have been a lot! Loved the insight given by Consumer NZ – very interesting and will be interesting to see what data comes from the next survey and if this aligns with what the community groups	No, I think this was a lot of value.	Pricing from wholesales – would like to learn more and korero around that.	Would be interested to see if consumption charges happen in the next year and how we come to learn about how people/families have changed patterns in their homes. How are we all collecting data?

		working with the most vulnerable are seeing.			
J	4	Different views/perspectives in a room 'Instructions' slide for the afternoon – open sess. Wholesale market 101 session.	Create the expectation at the Council of Energy Regulators (CER) that there will be recommendations from this group every 6 months. Promote your consumer wānanga brand in the CER, not just the EA brand.	EWN – finding pitch of value proposition work. Getting it investment ready.	Thank you very much for the manaakitanga and organising this forum again.
K	5	Connect Presentations Key messages from different organisations Listening to the high level information.	Invite Fincap and banks.	Collaboration Connections Working Groups	I would like to understand more about pre-pay legislation/regulation s/cost/end user price. Include UDL more in Working Groups.
L	5	A trusted forum that mixes up energy professionals, consumers reps, regulators and others with a very specific focus on what helps struggling consumers and those that help them. Space and time to connect and see where you can support or trigger action	Emphasise in each stage of the day, we have round tables at the end to help take steps forward. Look for those opportunities and get them on the board!	The value proposition for the EW work The data sharing/ privacy standard form with the OPC	

M	3	Some of the table discussions and connections with new people, being able to pick up on threads from the previous wānanga, Gareth/Sea's presentations	It felt a bit thrown together this time round for instance it was unclear why the AI session was needed (or could have been condensed significantly) and then having limited direction for the afternoon. It perhaps could have been a shorter day	The consumer updates were very valuable, always good to hear updates on consumer wellbeing initiatives underway	I'd also suggest having an EA representative at each table - there seemed to be a lot of staff attending but our table only had someone briefly in the morning
N	5	I got some deeper insights and understanding of what Te Mana Hiko does and that a lot of issues people were discussing on the day were very relevant to education and health which is my predominant background.	Perhaps some ice breaker activities that actually makes people move around the whare a bit? Another thing to consider from a tikanga perspective is if Te Mana Hiko is going to welcome everyone with karakia and mihi then seeing if there is anyone from the attendees that might want to respond to that welcome? Could reach out prior to the event and explain the 'why' behind the request - which in this case is simply the right to reply to the 'hosts' in a mutual exchange. There is of course much more that can be understood about that, however it is a good starting point to keep uplifting what is done in that space. :-)		Thank you for inviting me and for the opportunity to be a part of the day and the team. I really enjoyed it.
O	3.8	Privacy info & discussion EW Network collaboration & desire for action/need for seed	Presentation of stats re progress on energy hardship indicators Would love to hve significant announcement/progress update to workshop next wānanga.	EWN development Social retailing	Thanks Carl 😊

		funding to support initial coordination roles.	Something concrete like EWN funded, or \$750M reallocated to consultation on users.		
P	3	Good to see the consumer report Always good to catch up with everyone. Discussion on EWN – but risk of going round intros each time.	How do/might EAAG and wānanga complement/interface?		Thanks Carl & EA team!
Q	4	As below, I really appreciated the diversity of perspectives in discussions of industry issues facing consumers. Great MC energy and facilitation from Carl. Very nice venue and catering. I really liked the ice breaker of talking to people around you and being prepared to introduce them, and what they bring to the event that is different from yourself. Excellent connector, and to emphasise the range of attendee perspectives	Nothing huge. But as feedback for presenters of technical topics to a varied audience, I'd emphasise the importance of keeping in mind the wide range of experience and expertise in the room. I suspect many attendees did not fully follow the updates on spot price changes, particularly charts showing movements in ASX contracts. The presentation was well prepared, clear, and well delivered—just potentially not at an accessible technical level for a significant part of the audience (while being entirely appropriate for others). It may be worth checking with attendees from across the industry on how they found the technical level and	Resilience. Sad to hear that the Ara Ake Energy Affordability and Resilience Conference won't go ahead this year. The Commission is working in the resilience space at the moment, and keen to remain connected on work in this area. As below, keep us in mind where you think a Commission role / EDB price change perspective is useful to include.	I appreciated the exposure to, and reminder of, the distributional aspects of consumer affordability—particularly the rather sobering update from Sea Rotmann on affordability metrics. From the round-table discussions and presentations, I sensed some “distance” between parts of the Authority's current focus and the lived consumer experience,

			accessibility of the key messages. There is a risk that some participants come away feeling the industry is highly technical (which it is) and that regulators are, at times, speaking a different language. As a related aside, the presentation also prompted a thought about linking more directly to key drivers of recent price changes, such as the EDB DPP4 reset. Even at Authority events, there may be value in drawing on the Commission's perspective where it helps build a shared understanding of impacts on consumers. We'd be open to supporting this, either by contributing to presentations or offering a short overview of how these resets work and flow through to prices, if that would be helpful.		particularly around affordability. For example, discussions on encouraging better use of TOU pricing or EV charging felt somewhat removed from the realities of those in the room who are closer to the most constrained consumers. While these are important industry development issues, it highlighted that there are still more foundational aspects of the consumer experience that need attention. Balancing progress across the consumer experience spectrum is clearly a challenge, and I hope the round-table conversations (some of which I missed)
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					provided useful input on this. Thank you for creating that space. I also want to support a comment from an audience member (unfortunately I didn't catch their name) suggesting that, when consulting on changes, the Authority consider assessing and sharing expected participant responses and the likely impacts on consumers and prices. I found that a useful challenge for my own work at the Commission as well. Overall, the seminar provided valuable perspectives and raised important challenges.
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