

Perception and reality of energy poverty in Australia: Does it shape voting intentions?

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- ❑ Elections serve as the cornerstone of democratic accountability.
- ❑ Voters evaluate governments based on their performance in managing key economic and social issues and incumbents are rewarded or punished based on changes in household welfare.
- ❑ Myriad of factors influencing voter choices:
 - ❑ Economic conditions
 - ❑ Social ideology
 - ❑ Ideological alignment
 - ❑ Candidate characteristics
 - ❑ Relevance of specific policy issues
 - ❑ **Energy prices ?**

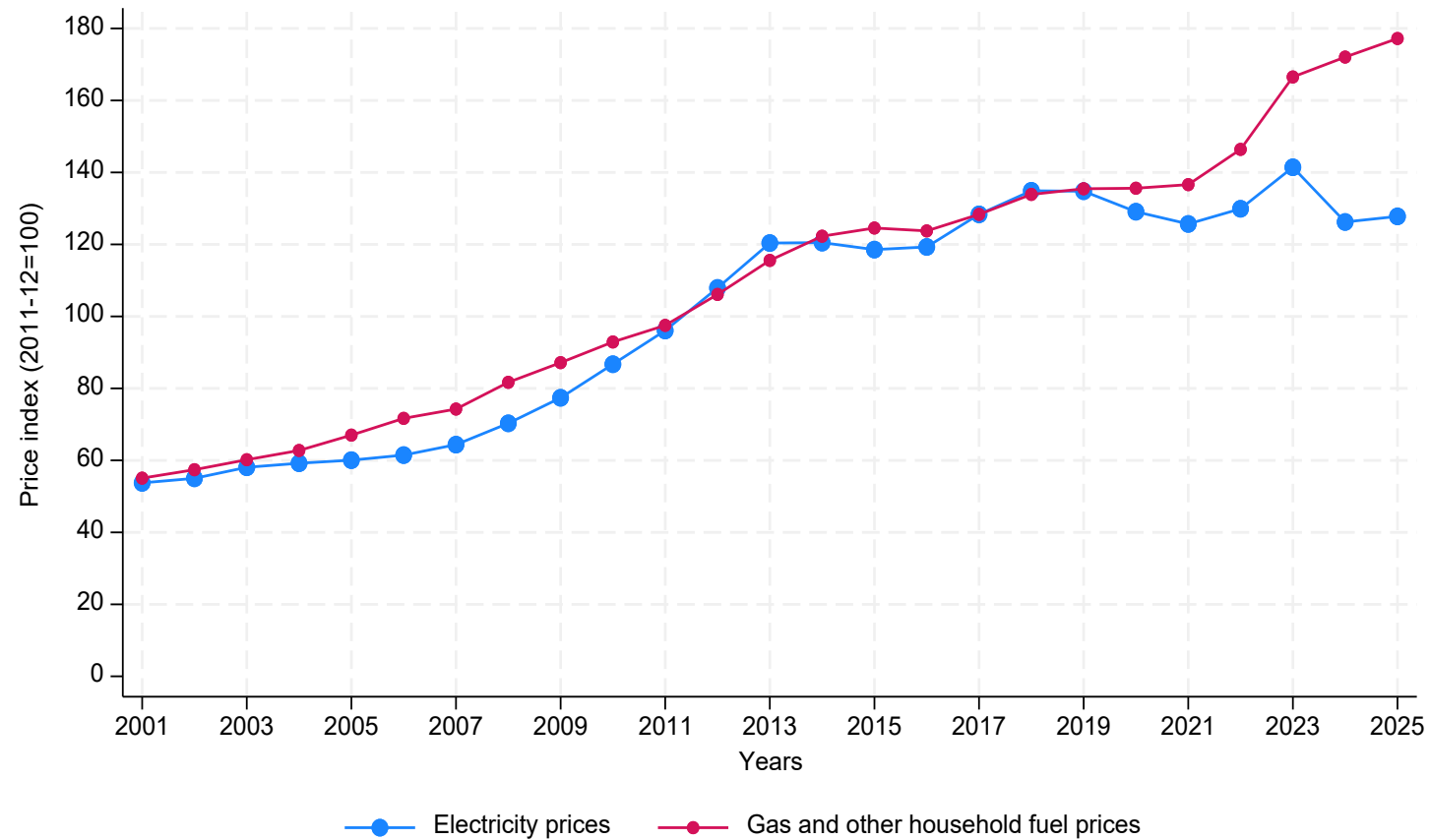
❑ Energy poverty:

- ❑ inability to afford adequate energy services that are required to ensure a decent standard of living.
- ❑ implications for voting behaviour.

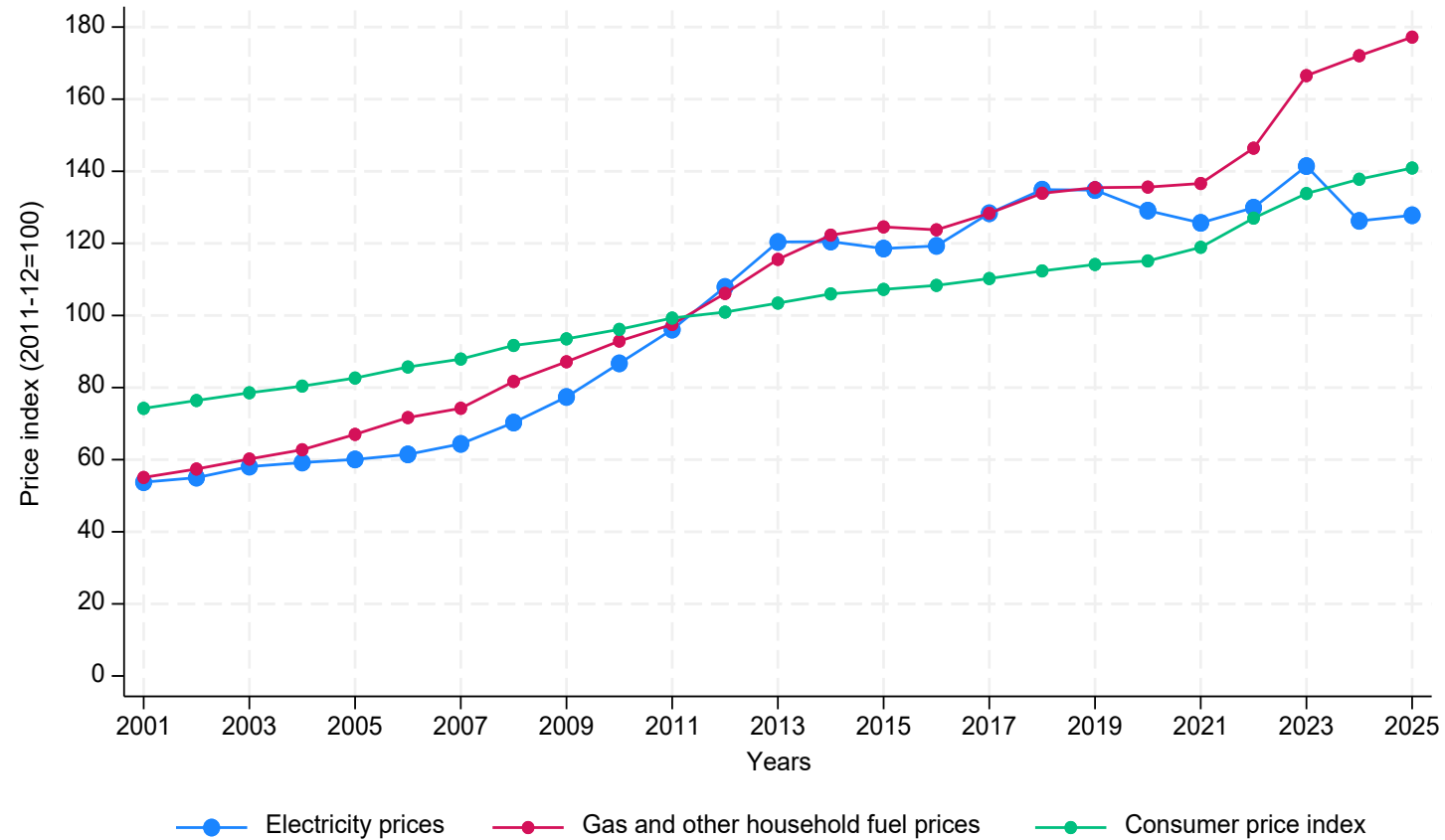
❑ In Australia:

- ❑ Has become a highly polarised political issue.
- ❑ Major parties diverging sharply on approaches to energy affordability, climate change mitigation and the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.
- ❑ Australia Greens and Teal Independents – aggressive decarbonisation policies.
- ❑ Centre and right-wing parties – market-based solutions or subsidies.

❑ In Australia: energy prices



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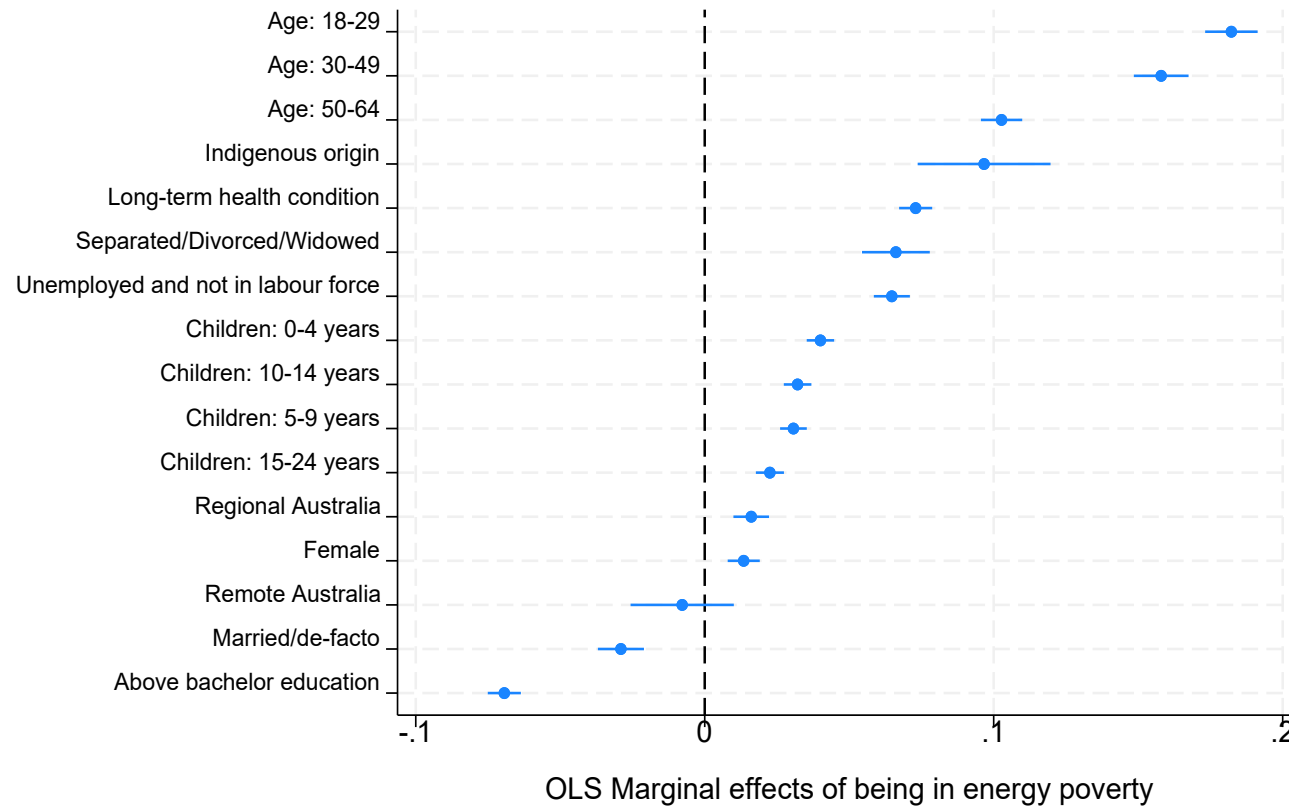


❑ In Australia: energy poverty status



Notes: Energy poverty is defined if the household is 'unable to heat their home' and/or is 'unable to pay their bills on time', based on responses in the HILDA survey. Data for 2010 was not collected in the HILDA survey.

❑ In Australia: who are likely to be in energy poverty?



Notes: Estimates are based on OLS specification. Variables are ordered based on their effect size on energy poverty in descending order.

Linking energy poverty to voting intentions in Australia [TTPN data]

☐ 1. Compare relationship between:

- ☐ Voting for either one of the major political parties (i.e. the Coalition or Labor)
as opposed to
- ☐ voting for a minor party, independent or being undecided

☐ **We find:** energy-poor households have 8 percentage points lower probability to vote for either Labor or the Coalition compared to voting for a minor party, independent or being undecided.

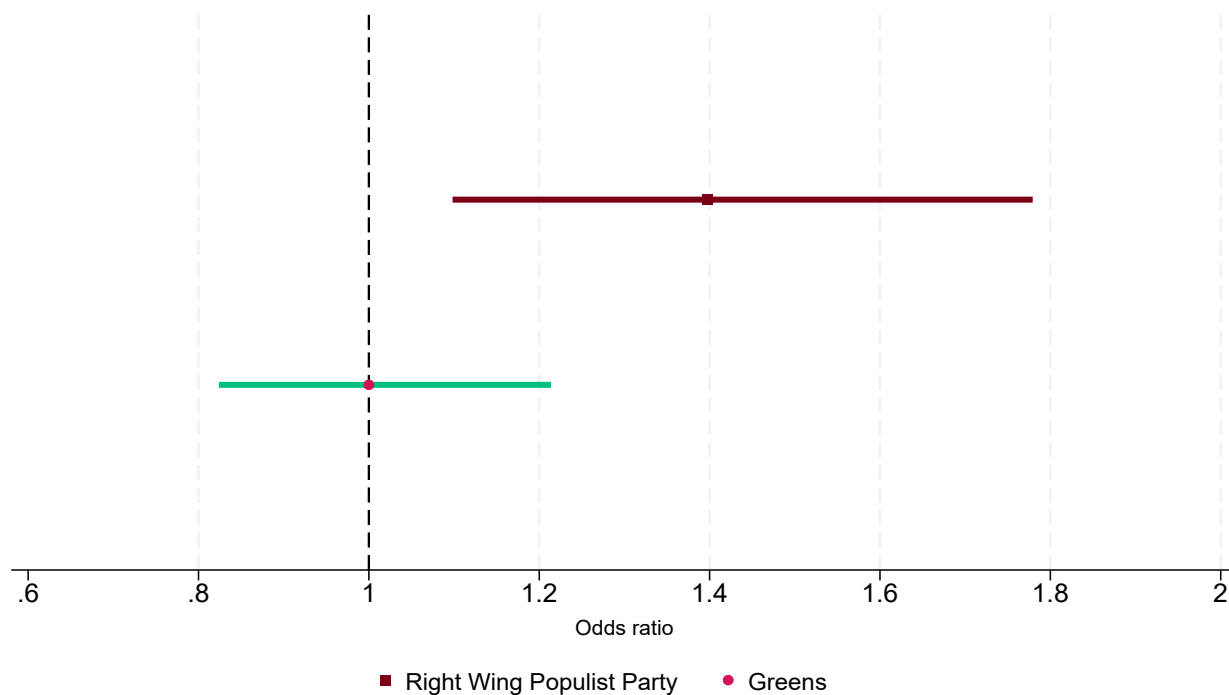
Linking energy poverty to voting intentions in Australia [TTPN data]

❑ 2. Compare relationship between:

- ❑ Voting for Labor
as opposed to
- ❑ Voting for the Coalition

❑ **We find:** energy-poor households reduce support for Labor by 3.7 percentage points.

Linking energy poverty to voting intention in Australia [TTPN data]



Notes: Estimation is based on a multinomial logit model. Intention to vote for either a right-wing populist party - the United Australia Party or One Nation Party - or for the Greens. The reference category is intending to vote either for an independents or other minor parties.

Key takeaways:

- ❑ Individual experiencing energy poverty are more likely to shift voting preference to minor parties away from major parties. [consistent with experiences in Europe and the US]
 - ❑ Recent polling ? – Minor parties and independents received more primary votes than the Coalition.
 - ❑ Caution against inferring causality.
- ❑ What it means for current election results – speculation?
 - ❑ Labor successfully campaigned on energy policies that includes subsidies, and their energy relief package seemed to have softened the perception.
 - ❑ Coalition's nuclear policies lacked significant details and clear messaging.
- ❑ Need to find a balance between urgent need for climate action with immediate economic realities we face.