

Cheaper Bills Conversation Guide

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Purpose

To engage persuadable voters in key electorates, and demonstrate that (1) clean energy brings our bills down, (2) parties' policies on clean energy will affect our bills, and (3) we can choose lower bills through clean energy at the election

This guide provides three conversation options to suit different scenarios:

1. **Rapid** (3-10 seconds); good for handing out flyers at train stations
2. **Engaging** (2-4 minutes); good for speaking with people at markets
3. **Canvassing** (5-15 minutes); good for door knocking

Our Story

SHARED VALUES: Every Victorian deserves to live in a home that's warm in winter and cool in summer – without breaking the bank on energy bills.

VILLAIN: Gas corporations have rigged our energy system to work for them, not for us. When gas prices go up because of war overseas, we pay more and they pocket huge profits - close to \$100 billion since 2022.

The Liberal National Coalition and One Nation plan to prop up the gas industry and delay the cheaper, cleaner energy that we can make right here in Victoria. Their delay will only drive our energy bills even higher.

VICTORY: More clean energy in our electricity grid is the fastest way to bring prices down.

We know this is possible because it's already happening - nearly half of our electricity now comes from cheap solar and wind and is generated right here in Victoria. To keep going we need to elect a government that keeps moving forward, not backwards.

VISION: With cheaper bills, healthier homes and an economy boosted by locally made clean energy, every Victorian can thrive.

Conversation Tips

Do	Don't
Ask questions and listen	Argue
Follow up on questions to get specific experiences	Miss opportunities to hear stories
Acknowledge feelings and concerns	Make judgements
Connect on values	Rely heavily on facts
Lead with cost-of-living: lower bills, control and protection from price shocks	Lead with climate when cost-of-living is the dominant concern
Ground everything in hope - the solutions are proven and already working	Use 'everything is at stake' arguments, or imply difficulty or sacrifice
Name the real cause of rising bills: Profit-seeking by energy companies, international price shocks, old coal power stations breaking down	
Use 'our sun and wind' framing - Australia's natural advantage, energy no one can cut off	
Draw a clear contrast between the two paths at the election	
Reference real savings: rooftop solar owners, households with batteries, the \$417 already saved	
The most effective conversations happen when the person feels like they're genuinely being heard. Connection is worth far more than facts.	

Testing

We are in the test phase, to rapidly get as much information as possible about what works and what doesn't work, so that we can improve our results in the longer term.

What are we testing?

1. Do our key messages work to engage *persuadable* voters?
2. Does our flyer reinforce our key messages, and is it well received by the public?
3. Can our volunteers easily follow the guide to have effective conversations?
4. What preparation is needed (training, resources, equipment/set-up, choice of location) to ensure we have impact?

How will we know if our conversations are working?

Measure	How	What this tells us
How many flyers were willingly taken?	• Recording the number of flyers given out • Debrief assessment about the proportion of people willing to take the flyer	• How appealing the visual layout of the flyer is • How visually and verbally approachable are we • How effective this particular location is in engaging voters
How many meaningful interactions did we have (per volunteer)?	• A 'meaningful interaction' is when you ask the key question and the person gives a genuine response • During debrief, volunteers report number of meaningful interactions they had, and calculate average per volunteer	• How visually and verbally approachable are we • How effective our key message is at gaining attention • How effective this particular location is in engaging voters
How many persuadable voters did we engage?	• For shorter conversations: During debrief, volunteers report the demographics of people we engaged • For Canvassing conversations: ○ Average initial score ○ Average change in score between initial and end	• How effective this particular location is in engaging a demographic of voters that are persuadable (not within our bubble, not antagonistic to us) • How effective our messages are • Whether our resources and conversations are accessible to key demographics
How did that feel for volunteers?	• During debrief, volunteers report how well they feel that went – impact, energy, safety	• How effective this particular location is in engaging voters • How well prepared were we • What improvements can we make to improve volunteer experience • How well is this tactic working

Rapid conversation

Length: 3-10 seconds, possibly longer

Good for: Handing out flyers to commuters at train stations

Success looks like: Getting flyers into the hands of voters, and build positivity and curiosity that they might read it

Structure:

“See how clean energy affects your bills this election!”

“This election will affect your power bills”

“Hi! We've got a flyer on how this Victorian election could affect your electricity bill. Would you like one?”

"Did you know the energy policies in this election could make a real difference to your power bill? Here's a quick explainer"

Tips:

- **Try different opening lines to see what gets the most attention**
- **Remember that cost of living is the number one voting issue** among Victorians, and is much more likely than “climate” to attract *persuadable* voters.
- **Give people a concrete reason to engage**, e.g. “Want to see how this election could affect your power bill?”
- **Avoid political/identity questions** like “Do you support renewable energy” as this will select for people who already agree with us
- **Add extra information if the person pauses** to take a look at the flyer, e.g. “The flyer shows that clean energy from wind and solar is way cheaper than energy from oil and gas. On the back, it shows that the Liberal party and One Nation are pushing fossil fuels which would drive up our energy bills.”
- **Engage in conversation if the person is interested** --> see “Engaging Conversation” below

Engaging conversation

Length: 2-4 minutes, possibly longer

Good for: Speaking with people at markets or events

Success looks like: Having a genuine two-way conversation establishing enough trust that the person is open minded to take a flyer and pledge to vote for cheaper bills

Structure:

Hook - give people a concrete reason to engage

"Hi there, would you like to know how the upcoming Victorian election could affect your power bill?"

"Did you know Victoria has the lowest wholesale electricity prices in the country?"

If the person stops to talk or signals their interest:

"I'm volunteering with [Environment Victoria] and we're having conversations in the community about the price of our energy bills because we know it's a big issue for many people at the moment."

"Have you noticed your energy bills going up?"

Validate their experience. If you have a similar experience, briefly share to relate.

Expand – why we're talking to people

"We're speaking with people because this is a real issue for the community and we want to work together do something about it so that bills don't keep rising."

"Our research shows that the policies that political parties have at this upcoming election could make a really big difference to our power bills. We're trying to make sure our political candidates adopt policies that will actually bring bills down."

Get curious/ask questions

"When you think about voting, how important is the cost of energy bills to you?"

"How important is it to you that our energy is not only affordable but also cleaner for our health and our environment?"

Share our key messages and gauge response

"Electricity from solar and wind is about half the cost of electricity from coal and gas. Clean energy is the future, and it's important to keep building it to keep our bills in

check. We have proof as we're seeing Victoria has the cheapest wholesale electricity in the country."

"We have abundant solar and wind energy that we can use and insulate ourselves from fuel price shocks linked to conflict overseas."

"Gas companies have made almost \$100 billion in profits since COVID – while the cost of living for regular people like you and me just keeps going up."

Sense check, link the issue to the election, distribute flyer with pledge to learn more

"Is this making sense? Would you consider issues like this when going to the polls in November for the state election?"

"Do you feel like you have an understanding of where Victoria and the major parties stand on clean energy today?"

"There's more information here on the flyer and through the QR link, please take a look"

Canvassing conversation

Length: 5-15 minutes

Good for: Door knocking, speaking with people at events

Success looks like: Asking questions, connecting on values, drawing out personal experiences, and ultimately moving someone from concern to action (pledge to vote for cheaper bills)

Structure:

Open – develop a connection and a commitment to discuss the topic

“Hi, I’m volunteering with [Environment Victoria] and we're having conversations with our neighbours about energy affordability and what we can do about it. “

“Can I have a conversation with you about that?”

“Have you noticed your energy bills going up?”

Test - gauge their opinion on affordable clean energy

“You might have seen that over a number of years more and more of our electricity is being made from solar and wind, with batteries to store energy. You might have also seen petrol and gas prices go up during COVID and in response to wars overseas.”

“On a scale of 1-10, how much do you agree with the following statement?:

More clean energy from wind and solar will bring energy bills down”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Disagree		<-- Somewhat agree-->						Agree-->	

Relate / contrast – state your answer to that scale question

"OK great, thank you! I personally would answer ... on that scale, which is why I'm out here volunteering and speaking to the neighbourhood. [So it's nice to hear that we have some common ground here] OR [So it's interesting that we have differing views on this, and I'm really keen to explore that with you]"

"Can you tell me more about why you picked that number?"

Dig – seek personal stories which relate to the issue (bulk of the conversation!)

Ask questions like:

“Do you have solar on your roof” / “Does anyone you know or any of your neighbours have solar?”

“Do you think rooftop solar is bringing down the cost of electricity?”

“How have the recent petrol and diesel price increases affected you?” / “Are you worried about what might happen to fuel prices in the near future?”

“After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, average Australian power bills rose by around \$400 a year, and during that time Australian gas companies made close to \$100

billion in windfall profits. How do you feel about corporations making large profits at times like that?”

“Did you know that Victoria has been building loads of solar and wind over the past decade, and now actually has the cheapest wholesale electricity price of any state? This is because electricity from wind and solar is about half the price of electricity made from coal and gas. Would you support building more local wind and solar if it brought your bills down?”

Listen closely, ask curious questions to move beyond opinion and into experience and story.

Do you have any points of agreement? Emphasise where you agree.

Test – gauge if their opinion has changed

Note that you don’t need to test again if they started as a 9 or 10, and they are really engaged with the conversation. Instead, just reflect what stories you’ve heard them say and then ask them to commit (next step)

“I’m hearing that you care about energy affordability. I heard you say ... [summarise].”

“I’m wondering if this conversation has been helpful or has shifted anything for you? If we go back to the scale of 1 to 10 now, how much do you agree with the following statement?:

More clean energy from wind and solar will bring energy bills down”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Disagree			<-- Somewhat agree-->				Agree-->		

Note (and celebrate) any positive changes

Pivot to election

"This conversation has been really interesting for me. I'm passionate about the potential for clean energy made here to lower our bills. I think this state election coming up in November is a great opportunity for us to make sure that, whoever the next government is, that they commit to delivering more wind, more solar and cheaper bills."

Ask - will they pledge to vote for cheaper bills this election?

“Our volunteers have been out talking to election candidates and asking them to commit to exactly that – more clean energy – and one thing that would help us convince them to do that is if you sign a pledge to say that you would vote for the candidate or party that delivers clean energy and lower bills.”

“If you sign the pledge, we would tell those candidates, "This many people from the neighbourhood have pledged", and we'd also send you an email closer to the election with updated information on which candidates have agreed to our asks.”

“Will you sign the pledge?”

Follow up ask? Can you come to X event?

Thank them for their time and wish them a lovely day!