

Pretoria, South Africa  
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## News release

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### **Majority of South Africans say Eskom should be privatised, new Afrobarometer study shows**

About three-fifths of South Africans say Eskom must be privatised to ensure an effective supply of electricity in the country, a new Afrobarometer survey indicates.

An even greater proportion of citizens believe that the government monopoly on electricity provision should be ended to allow other actors to generate and distribute power in South Africa.

Citizens say the government is performing poorly in providing a reliable supply of electricity, and a plurality indicate that they would be willing to pay more for electricity in exchange for better services, rather than paying less and receiving poor services.

South Africa is in the throes of an electricity crisis, with daily “load-shedding” that is crippling an already ailing economy.

#### **Key findings**

- Almost nine in 10 South Africans (87%) say the government is doing a poor job of providing a reliable electricity supply, a 24-percentage-point increase from the last Afrobarometer survey in 2021 (Figure 1). Most (69%) say it is performing “very badly.”
- Half (51%) of citizens say they would be willing to pay more for electricity in exchange for better services, while about one-third (32%) disagree (Figure 2).
  - Support for paying more for electricity to receive better services is particularly strong among residents of KwaZulu-Natal (66%). It is weakest in the Eastern Cape (37%) and among the poorest respondents (41% of those experiencing high lived poverty) and those with primary or no formal education (42%) (Figure 3).
- Almost six in 10 South Africans (59%) Africans “agree” or “strongly agree” that Eskom must be privatised to ensure effectiveness in the supply of electricity. Only 25% “disagree” or “strongly disagree” (Figure 4).
- Three-fourths (76%) of citizens say the government should allow other actors to generate and distribute electricity. Only 13% disagree (Figure 5).

#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

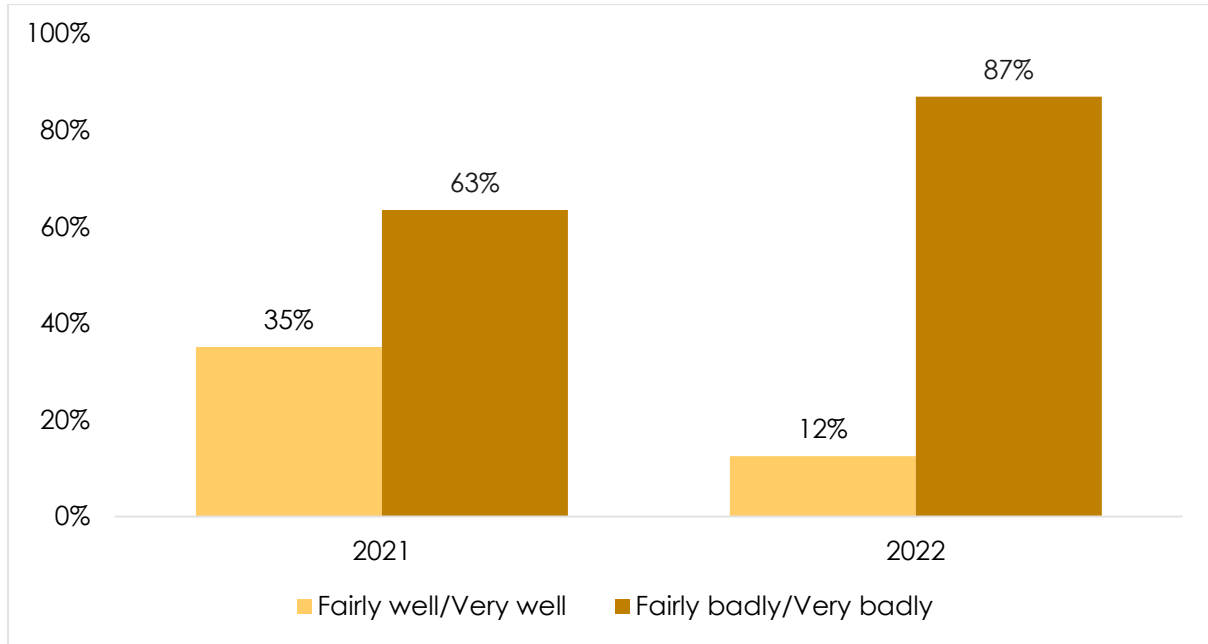
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in 2023. Afrobarometer’s national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,582 adult South Africans in November-December 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of

+/-2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2018, and 2021.

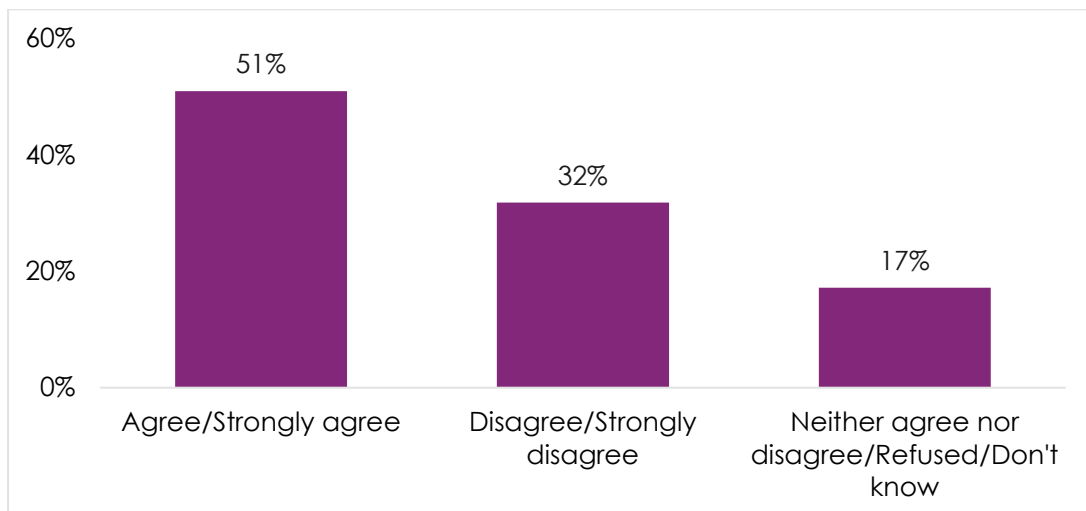
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Government performance in provision of reliable electricity supply | South Africa | 2022**



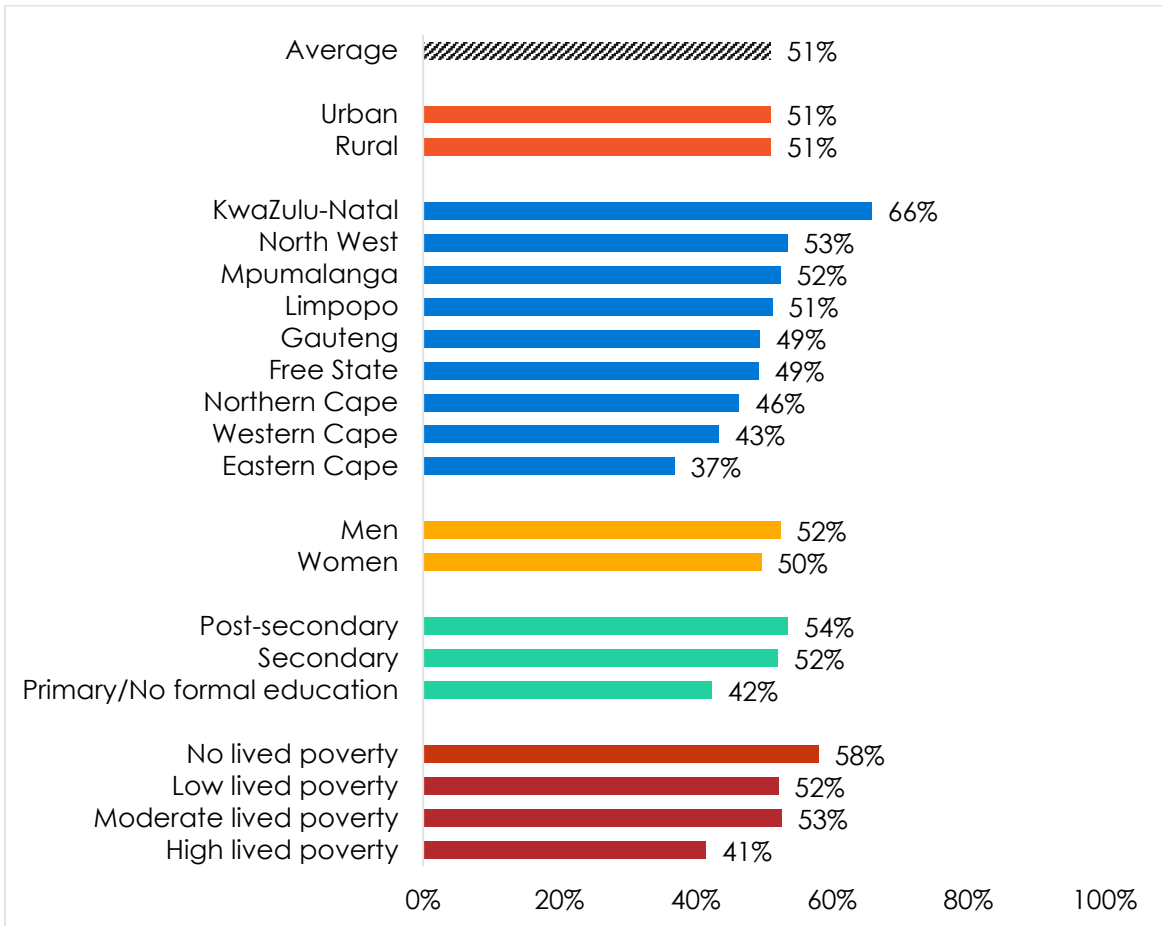
**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Providing a reliable supply of electricity?

**Figure 2: Pay more for electricity for better services or less for poor services? | South Africa | 2022**



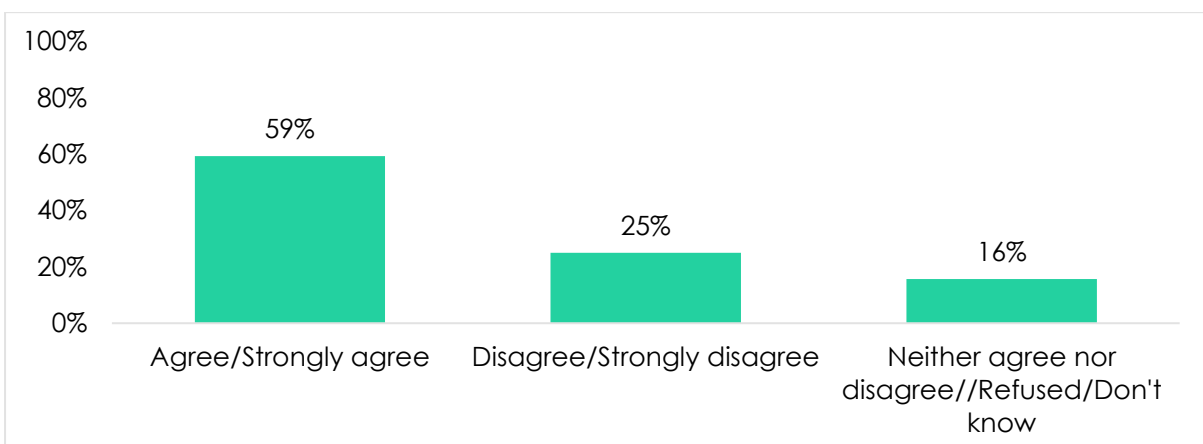
**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: It is better to pay more for electricity for better services than paying less and receiving poor services?

**Figure 3: It is better to pay more for electricity for better services** | by demographic group | South Africa | 2022



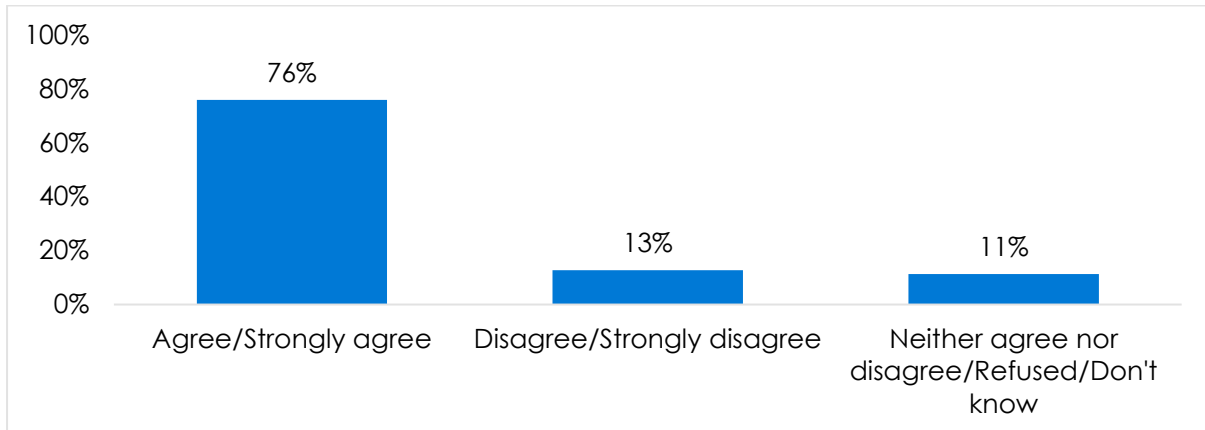
**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: It is better to pay more for electricity for better services than paying less and receiving poor services? (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

**Figure 4: Should Eskom be privatised?** | South Africa | 2022



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: To ensure effectiveness in the supply of electricity in our country, Eskom should be privatised?

**Figure 5: Should other actors generate and distribute electricity? | South Africa**  
| 2022



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't heard enough to say: The government should allow other actors to generate and distribute electricity in South Africa?

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