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# THE DIVERSIFICATION OPPORTUNITY

**A**s a business, it's important to always be on the lookout for the next opportunity. Because things change, demand and expectations evolve, and businesses that are stuck in their ways are often the ones left behind.

Of course, there's a lot to be said for specialisation: knowing your lane and sticking to it.

But today, your customers are more focused on managing their energy than ever before. Costs are rising and there's an increased desire to manage those costs.

That opportunity doesn't just include producing your own energy - it's how it's stored, and how it's used, too, which is where batteries and smart home technologies come into play.



Add to that the convenience factor of automation, and you can see the opportunity to evolve the way products and services are offered to clients.

"For a long time, many contractors and electricians have done the jobs clients ask of them, which is of course a great approach to work," says Daryl Read, [Gemcell](#) Director and Owner of [POPES Electrical and Data Supplies](#).

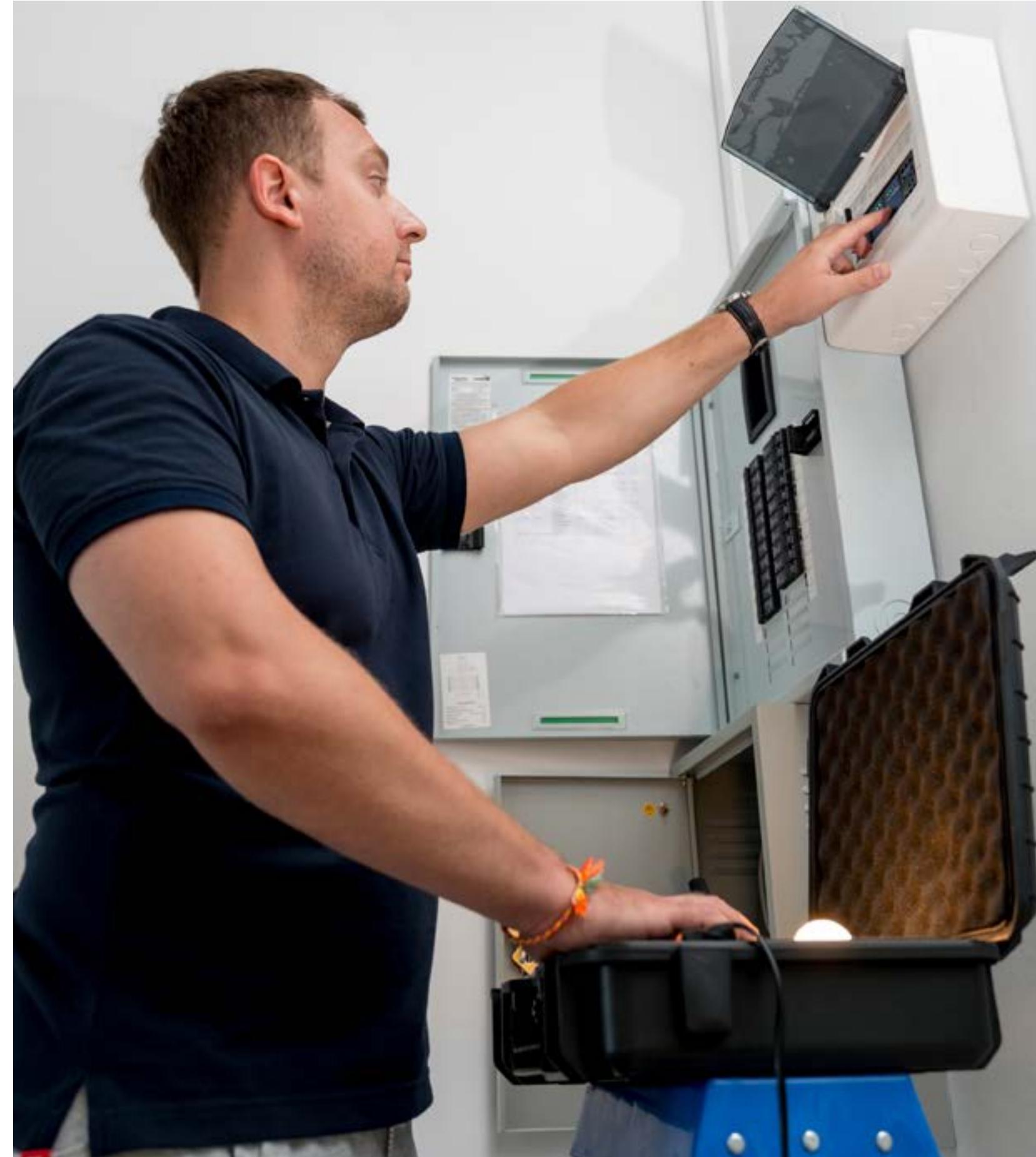
"Today, we're seeing a shift in the dynamics of that relationship. We're seeing contractors become far more consultative, offering advice and expertise to their customers, to help them achieve goals such as 'become more energy efficient'.

"The notion of becoming a 'trusted adviser' has become increasingly present in many professions over the past decade, and that same opportunity is there for contractors to embrace."

In this guide, we focus on three core areas of opportunity for contractors in 2026: home batteries, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and smart home automation. We explore the developments in each area, the opportunity that is there - and we share tips on how to seize that opportunity too.

At Gemcell, we're committed to helping electrical contractors across Australia succeed, so we hope you enjoy this guide to opportunities in 2026.

In 12 months' time, you may look back at this moment as one that sparked positive change in your business.



# SMART HOME AUTOMATION

## THE BACKGROUND

Smart home automation has been around for a while. But while it made headlines in the late 90s and early 2000s, it has increasingly hit its mainstream straps over the past five to eight years.

The global smart home market in 2018 was valued at around [US\\$54bn](#). Today, thanks to a multitude of reasons, including increased internet of things (IoT) and AI adoption, the market today has increased significantly - with some estimates putting it currently around [\\$216bn](#), and 2030 forecasts pitching it around \$546bn.

Rising energy costs have prompted people to pay

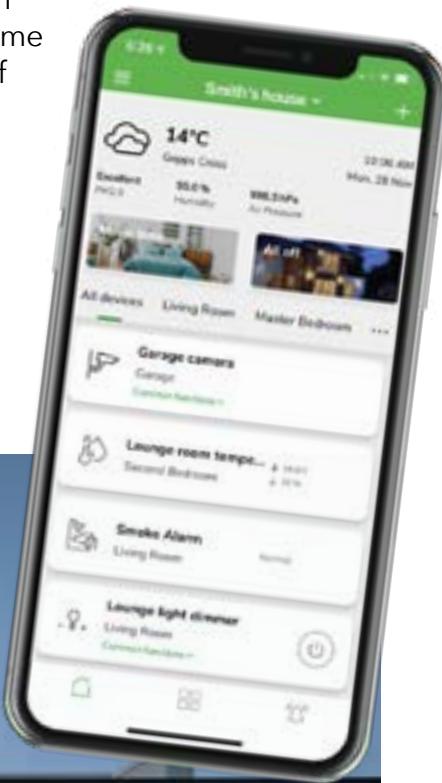


increasing attention to energy consumption, and layered on top of convenience, it's a compelling proposition for most homeowners.

"It's not about the coolness factor anymore," says [Clipsal by Schneider](#)'s Offer Manager - Comfort & Energy Management, Tim Fant. "Smart home automation used to be something you'd find in big homes. It's definitely more mainstream today.

"Studies show that when people are building a home now, almost two-thirds of them expected to have smart home products."

The appetite's there, connectivity issues that once caused headaches are a thing of the past - and automation offers a big opportunity for contractors.



## THE OPPORTUNITY

The market's growing, and an increasing number of affordable solutions are on the market - and people are willing to spend.

"According to research we've conducted, the average budget for upgrading a home to make it smarter is just over \$2000," says Tim.

Of course, that's just the start. Once you've explored the best investment for clients, you can introduce them to other smart home products.

Understanding their motivation is key: do they want convenience, or are they more concerned about saving energy?

By understanding the key driver, you can align products with their needs - and set up ways to track the impact too, which can help for the next conversation.

"People are gradually starting to become more aware of smart home technology, but there's still a long way to go - there are still a lot of people who don't really know what things do - they still think there are too many systems," says Tim.

"There's an opportunity for electrical contractors to be able to try and bring things together and offer one ideal solution."

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS

Smart home tech has come a long way since clapping to turn the lights on - and Tim says the biggest initial opportunity comes from lighting.

"It's the first step into smart home technology - having the little speaker to provide voice control, and controlling the lights," says Tim.

"It's the easiest and lowest cost entry point."

Once customers have the ability to turn lights on and off wherever they are, the next convenience is a natural sell.

"Then you can add in smart garage door controls, motorised blinds, control plug-in appliances indoors, outdoor ceiling fans, garden lights - there are a host of possibilities," says Tim.

"We've developed our Wiser app that enables you to control all of the devices, set schedules, set automations, set scenes and control your environment automatically, which offers huge convenience.

"People are also bringing all of their smart devices into Google Home, for example, and controlling them from there."



## COMMON OBJECTIONS - AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM!

### I am worried about cyber security

The Australian government standards are now mandating [Secure-by-Design](#) for consumer smart devices (the upcoming Cyber Security Rules 2025). As the installer, we mitigate this risk on-site by configuring the system on a separate, isolated IoT network, ensuring your private data remains segregated and secure from your smart devices.

### The system seems too complex - I don't want 10 different apps!

Complexity is the result of unmanaged, incremental installation. By working with one contractor (me!) I can ensure everything works together, simply and effectively.

### It is too expensive and only for brand-new, luxury homes.

Smart home technology is entirely scalable and cost-effective. You control the budget. We can start by automating high-impact elements like lighting and climate control, and can build on later.

### Smart devices waste energy by adding more electronics

Smart automation is one of the most effective tools for energy saving! Smart systems are fundamentally energy management tools - delivering measurable efficiency gains. Some reports show potential savings of up to [23% on household energy](#) consumption by automating and monitoring the heaviest users, such as HVAC and lighting.

## KEY AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY IN 2026



# HOME EV CHARGERS

## THE BACKGROUND

Electric vehicles (EVs) have been slowly building traction in Australia over recent years, and in the 12 months to the end of October 2025, accounted for [more than 12% of all new car sales](#). This is up from [9.61% in 2024](#).

"Australia's been quite slow in the adoption of EVs, but demand is growing," says Tim. "There are more affordable models on the market today, and with that comes an increase in demand for EV chargers."

The EV debate can be polarising, particularly in more regional areas where the charging infrastructure is still being developed and the distances people need to travel, while in urban areas with limited parking, accessing home charging can be challenging.



## THE OPPORTUNITY

With increasing numbers of people purchasing EVs, it's understandable EV owners want the ability to charge their vehicles – quickly – at home.

"We've seen demand for EV chargers increase, and they're becoming more affordable, too," says Tim.

That opportunity is understandable, particularly for customers who have their own parking and the ability to install an EV charger in, for example, a garage.

The opportunity also links into the solar and battery market as well as smart home automation – because, by using excess solar energy to charge a vehicle, it's essentially motoring for free.

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS

When we talk EV chargers, we're not talking about plugging the car into a small trickle charger – we're talking about fast chargers of up to 22kW that will fully charge a vehicle in 4-6 hours.

"There are still a lot of 'dumb' chargers on the market – you just plug it in and hit start," says Tim.



"However, chargers are becoming a lot smarter – they have the ability to connect to the internet, third party suppliers, third party charge operators, and have their own app to schedule when you charge the vehicle."

This plays perfectly into the energy efficient conversation – if you're helping your customers make the most of the energy they're producing, smart chargers that charge in the context of the solar power being produced, scale back when needed and accelerate when possible.

"Dynamic load management dims the charger to stay within the home's limits," explains Tim.

"If the home's got a 63 amp feed, and they turn the air-con on, turn the big induction cooktop on, and they've got their car plugged in, the charger will dim down, or even shut off automatically, and then ramp itself back up again once that load drops."

Another development is the integration of smart chargers into automation systems.

"This means we'll see the apps and how energy is used in the home become more and more intelligent," says Tim.

## HOW TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

- Talk about the rising take up of EVs, and the rising demand for smart chargers.
- Educate customers on the benefits of smart chargers versus regular chargers.
- Position chargers in the context of a smart, energy efficient home.
- Compare the costs of charging at home versus using other sources of energy – make a charger an investment, not a cost.

## COMMON OBJECTIONS: AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM!

### The public charging network is growing fast, so a home charger isn't really necessary.

The vast majority of EV charging ([around 80% to 95%](#)) is performed conveniently at home overnight. Having a charger at home means you can always access power, rather than waiting for hours inconveniently elsewhere.

### Charging at home will increase my electricity bill.

Smart charging practices, especially with solar, minimise the cost to nearly zero, however it's important to [compare](#)

[like-for-like](#). Stats show that fuelling a petrol car for 100km is estimated to cost \$19.32, using a supercharger to power an EV costs \$8.28 per 100km. Charging via the grid costs \$3.60 per 100km, while using solar costs \$0.60 per 100 km.

### I can just use a standard power point (Level 1) for charging, why pay for an EV charger?

A standard power point is inefficient and can be unsafe for continuous, high-draw EV charging. A dedicated charger provides up to three times faster charging speed (up to 22 kW depending on the circuit), and can draw on power when

it's available, meaning greater efficiency.

### The wiring upgrade to my switchboard will cost a fortune

Not necessarily, but load management is a key issue here, and another opportunity. A switchboard upgrade may be required, and the sell here is to explain an upgrade will be futureproofing. Some switchboards can be a mess with a number of different bits being added in, but products like Clipsal's [MAXBAR](#) neatly futureproof switchboards for EVs, batteries and solar, bringing all of the sources into one place.

# HOME BATTERIES

### THE BACKGROUND

Solar systems are now commonplace across Australia, with [4.2 million solar power systems installed on homes and small businesses as of October 2025](#).

As of December 2024, however, there were just [185,798 batteries installed](#) with a solar system.

Until recently, batteries were perceived by many as an unnecessary expense. Unit prices were high, and payback time unjustifiably long.

That is a perception that's quickly changing.



### THE OPPORTUNITY

Rising energy costs have seen people reevaluate the value of home energy management systems, while the Government's [Cheaper Home Battery scheme](#), launched in July 2025, has shaved up to 30% off the cost of installing a home battery.

Clipsal by Schneider's Tim Fant says, "Previously, we saw around a 20% uptake of a battery with a new solar system - now it's gone up to around 50%.

"There's a big trend towards having batteries in addition to the solar system, and that presents a huge opportunity for contractors."

Awareness of solutions that can help manage and reduce energy costs is growing, says Tim.

Government incentives are a key driving force here, so it's smart for contractors to ensure customers are aware of the opportunity.

"When you're talking about a \$10,000-\$12,000 battery, 30% saving is a lot of money," he says.

### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS

Features for optimising energy usage as part of a smart home setup are getting smarter and smarter. They're helping customers manage their energy use patterns better, and subsequently reducing their energy costs.



"We're increasingly seeing smart home automation systems now being used to give people more control over energy usage in the home, when certain things - such as hot water systems, pool pumps and EV chargers - are used," says Tim.

"This way, people are able to make sure they're leveraging their solar during the day, but they've still got enough to run other things at night."

The ability to be connected and in control is a key driving factor, too, with peace of mind a key consideration for people who value things such as controlling lights while they're away, and having hot water when they return.

### HOW TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

- Create marketing campaigns focusing on the Government incentive, with the context of rising energy costs.
- Position yourself as an expert in home batteries - put a page on your website, talk about it on social media, do some local PR.
- Talk about the long-term benefits, including controlling your energy costs.

### COMMON OBJECTIONS: AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

#### A battery is too expensive - the upfront cost is too high to justify!

Solar batteries offer a good return on investment, particularly with the Government incentive and rising energy costs. The average payback period for a battery is [7.3 years](#), according to an August 2025 paper by the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC).

#### The battery will wear out too quickly, and I'll have to replace it too soon.

Modern batteries are warrantied to last, and this technology can nearly double your solar savings. High-quality residential batteries typically have a 10-year warranty that guarantees they will [retain 70% to 80% of their original capacity](#). Furthermore, the Clean Energy Council (CEC) confirms that adding a battery can almost double the annual bill savings of a standalone solar system.

#### I'm worried about safety and fire risk; is this technology safe for my home?

All installations have to adhere to mandatory Australian safety standards that mitigate fire risk. [Every residential battery installation must follow the requirements of Australian Standard AS/NZS 5139:2019](#), which sets mandatory rules for battery location, fire-resistant barriers, and electrical separation. Compliance is required for certification and rebates.

#### My feed-in tariff is decent, so I don't see the financial need to store the power.

Self-consumption provides a [much higher financial return](#) than exporting. The value of using stored solar is equivalent to avoiding peak retail electricity prices (often 5 to 10 times higher than the feed-in tariff).

#### The technology is changing too fast - I should wait for a next gen battery.

The financial incentive for delaying your decision will decline, reducing your ultimate savings. [The Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water \(DCCEEW\)](#) confirms that the value of the federal battery discount (STCs) is explicitly set to gradually decline each year until 2030.

# SETTING UP FOR DIVERSIFICATION SUCCESS



REMEMBER, PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE. WE EXPLORE THE KEY AREAS THAT NEED YOUR ATTENTION.

## → PUBLICISE WHAT YOU CAN DO – AND WHY IT'S NEEDED

Regardless of whether you're offering a new product area or a new array of services, it's not going to work unless your potential customers know all about it. They need to know what you can do, and – more importantly – why they should care.

Make sure your website has detailed information about 'why'. Statistics about energy prices, household energy consumption, Government rebates and the benefits of home automation, for example, will help get people on board. But that alone is not enough. Talk in your marketing and on social media about the problem you're solving, the benefits that are achievable, the products out on the market, the rebates, the why. And do it constantly and consistently.

Create a brochure about your new area of expertise, and share it with your clients. Become the expert – become the trusted adviser – and people will begin to gravitate to you.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK – IS THIS THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU?

Of course, as a business owner, you've got to make sure the opportunity is the right one for you. You need to do your homework, assess the potential, and take the steps that are right for you accordingly.

Morgan Wilson, Founder and Director of [Creditte](#), a Brisbane-based business advisory and accountancy firm, has seen many organisations try to diversify – and fail. He says ensuring the cashflow is genuinely going to support your new offering is essential.

"Most diversification attempts fail because they look good on paper but destroy cashflow in practice. Before you add a new service, map out the setup costs, learning curve, and likely return. If it's not adding to your margins or strengthening your market position within 12 to 18 months, it's probably not the right move. We see this all the time. The real test isn't whether you can do it. It's whether you can scale it and whether the juice is genuinely worth the squeeze."

By doing your homework before you go too far, you can give your diversification opportunity the best possible chance of success.

## ARE YOU SET UP TO HANDLE GROWTH?

While the opportunity might be there, and you have the ability to do the job well, your business needs to be set up to handle growth. That means up-to-date bookkeeping, a strong quoting process, and cashflow forecasting that tells you what's coming.

Morgan says: "Without that foundation, most diversification attempts become expensive lessons you didn't need to learn. Good systems, clear financial visibility, and confident leadership. That's the baseline."

## AND KEEP COMPLIANCE, LICENSING AND INSURANCE AT THE TOP OF YOUR MIND!

Don't forget the mundane-but-important stuff like insurance too. Every new service opens the door to new liability, so you need to ensure you're covered.

"You'll want to review public liability, professional indemnity, and product liability coverage," Morgan says. "Check whether staff need additional licences or certifications for new equipment or systems. This isn't red tape. It's risk management. Get it wrong and one claim can wipe you out."

## IDENTIFY TRAINING AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

New product areas will likely need training, and you need to ensure you have the right licences to perform any new task. Check with a body such as [Master Electricians](#) to confirm what's required in your state, and talk with your trusted Gemcell suppliers to explore training opportunities.

## IS THERE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE THE BUSINESS MODEL?

While traditionally, electricians and contractors operate on a job-by-job basis, there's increasing potential for a subscription-based model for contractors. Just think – a check-in every quarter, assessing the effectiveness of a customer's energy

management, and recommendations on what's next – all for a fee. This gives you a regular opportunity to talk with customers, and become that valuable part of their day-to-day life. It also gives you a genuine opportunity to upsell, advise, and keep your customers close. For an additional fee, priority service could be offered, too.

"Subscription models are the smartest shift most tradies aren't making yet," says Morgan. "Think of ongoing maintenance plans for solar systems, EV chargers, or home automation. Predictable revenue, steadier cashflow, and stronger client retention. To make it work, you need clear service tiers, automated billing, and a CRM or accounting system that can handle recurring payments. Start small, prove the model, and scale what works. The contractors who crack this now will be the ones still standing in five years because they've built predictable revenue into an unpredictable industry."

#### REMEMBER – YOU'RE EVOLVING, NOT CHANGING

Diversification works best when it deepens your existing expertise, not dilutes it. It should feel a natural step, not something unusual or unconventional.

Morgan says, "Two of our electrical contractor clients have added smart home automation with relative ease to their service offering, because it aligns with their skill sets and client base.

"The goal isn't to reinvent the business. It's to expand in ways that make you more valuable to the same customer. Think about it like the classic "Would you like fries with that?" What services can you add that enhance the value of your average customer transaction?"

#### BECOMING THE TRUSTED ADVISER

In the opening page of this guide, we talked about becoming a trusted adviser. But what does that actually mean?

Embracing this concept could be the difference between you making a roaring success of these new opportunities and not.

Charmaine Keegan, Founder and Director at [Smarter Selling](#), says becoming a trusted adviser is something that needs to be worked at, and it's a

concept that has to become part of your brand.

"To be the trusted adviser, you need to think like one," she says.

"Are you an industry expert? Do you repost blogs or share posts? Are you helpful to your clients? Do you know all the pain points that the client will have and how to show that your solution solves them?"

Charmaine says that as a trusted adviser you know the other solutions out there, and you can calmly and competently explain to the client why your approach is their best course of action.

"A trusted adviser doesn't beg for a sale – that's negative and conveys a desperate energy. Trusted advisers are driven to help more people succeed, so they approach their clients as 'business partners'; they're problem finders as well as problem solvers,



and approach conversations from the perspective of finding the best solution for the client."

A key point to note here – which ties perfectly into the opportunities outlined earlier – is the concept of explaining not only what the product is, but the benefit it provides the client.

For example, a smart EV charger will charge an EV when demand for energy in the home is low. The benefits of this are you can ensure there's enough power for everything else, but more importantly can help save money by using energy more efficiently.

Smart home automation too – yes, there's a convenience factor, but by using smart home technology you can reduce energy consumption and therefore save money. Now that's adding value.



## SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY IN 2026: A FINAL WORD

**F**or electrical contractors across Australia, there are a whole host of opportunities to keep evolving and growing your business – the right path for you is something only you can decide.

"The world is changing rapidly – people are more energy conscious than they were, EV take-up is increasing and as businesses we have to give people what they want, or they'll go to a provider who can," says Gemcell's Daryl Read.

"Diversifying revenue streams is smart, as it reduces reliance on your other revenue streams – the key is not to dilute one in favour of the

other, unless it's a strategic move.

"With AI coming more to the fore, and technology developing rapidly, it's essential contractors can offer as comprehensive a service to their customers as possible – by doing so, you can lay exceptionally solid foundations that will be the basis of success over the coming decade."

At Gemcell, through our extensive independent wholesale network across Australia, and our established relationships with suppliers you can trust, we're here every step of the way to help you grow, evolve, and develop your business – and build trusted, strong relationships with clients.