



The following is an unpublished letter that CUAC Executive Officer, Jo Benvenuti sent to *The Age* correcting factual inaccuracies in the article entitled 'Smart Meters Given a Fail' published on 4 October 2011. [The online article available here was subsequently corrected.](#)

The article 'Smart meters given a fail' (The Age, 4 October 2011) incorrectly stated that "Victoria suspended the roll-out of the [smart] meters. Clarification is needed to ensure consumers are not misinformed about smart meters, the status of the roll-out and its implications. There is much concern, and even fear, in the community about the impact of smart meters. Given this, it is important that widely disseminated information on the roll-out is accurate.

The Victorian Government is currently reviewing the smart meter program "to determine whether, and under what circumstances, the program can deliver consumers value for money." This review is in addition to the already announced moratorium on mandatory reassignments of consumers to time-of-use prices. While the Government decides on the future of the program, the roll-out is ongoing, with distribution companies continuing to install meters at homes and small businesses across the state.

The Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre has highlighted to the previous government and to the current Government's review process our concerns about the smart metering program. From the outset, we have raised concerns about cost, impacts on vulnerable consumers and inadequate community consultation and engagement. However, given the significant investment already made, we are of the view that the roll-out of smart meters should continue, but with an increased focus on consumer protection and consumer benefit. As the government finalises policy and regulatory arrangements, CUAC will continue its advocacy to ensure that the potential benefits of smart meters are realised and passed on to consumers.

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