



Smart meters and saving money on my energy bill

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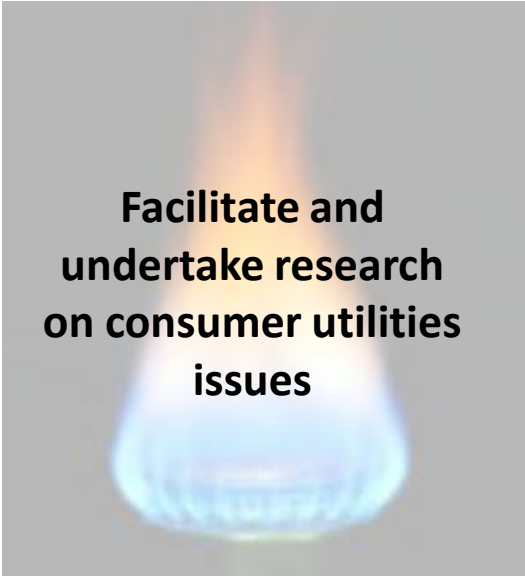
Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre

About CUAC

Established in 2002 to:



**Represent all
Victorian energy
and water
consumers in policy
and regulatory
processes**

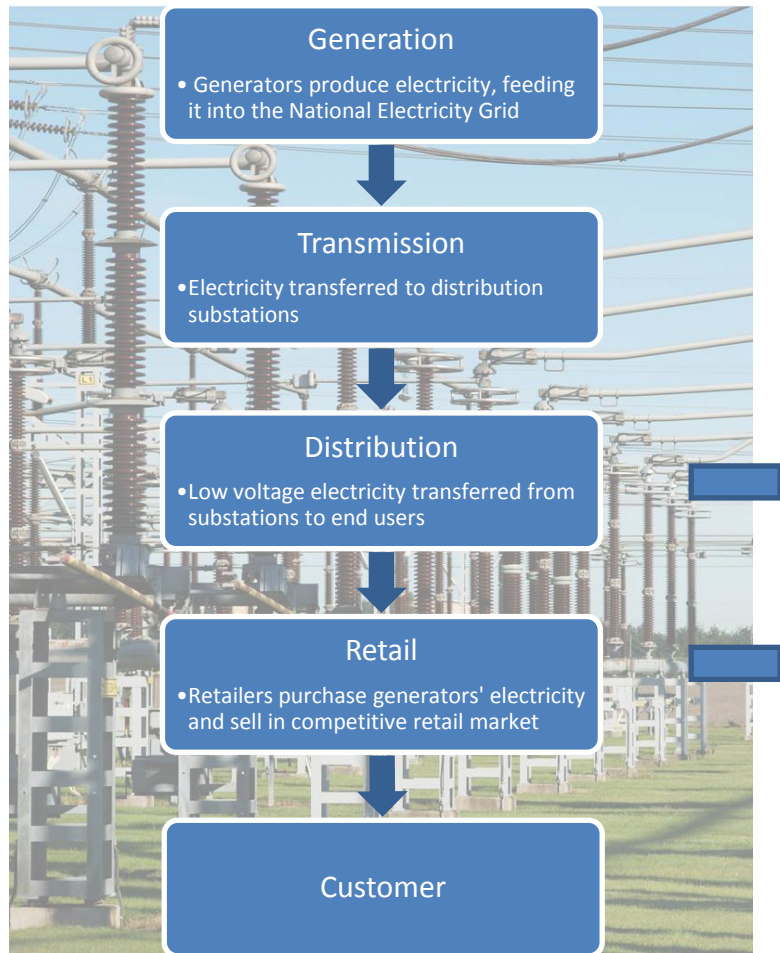


**Facilitate and
undertake research
on consumer utilities
issues**



**Monitor grassroots
consumer utilities
issues with
particular regard for
low-income,
disadvantaged and
rural consumers**

All about electricity in Victoria



Distribution companies SP Ausnet, Jemena, United Energy, Citipower & Powercor

More than a dozen retailers, including AGL, Red Energy & TRUenergy

What is a smart meter?

Measures electricity consumption every 30 minutes.

Communicates wirelessly with the electricity distribution company



Can communicate with other technology platforms

Will enable blackouts to be detected immediately

Why did the Government decide to install smart meters across the state?



To manage the costs associated with increasing peak demand.

The few hottest days when energy demand is at its highest level are estimated to account for around 20 per cent of your power bill.

It is estimated that every \$1000 air conditioner installed in homes in Australia adds thousands of dollars to the cost of our electricity infrastructure.

How does it address this problem of peak demand? – Flexible pricing

Enables higher prices to be charged during periods of high demand.

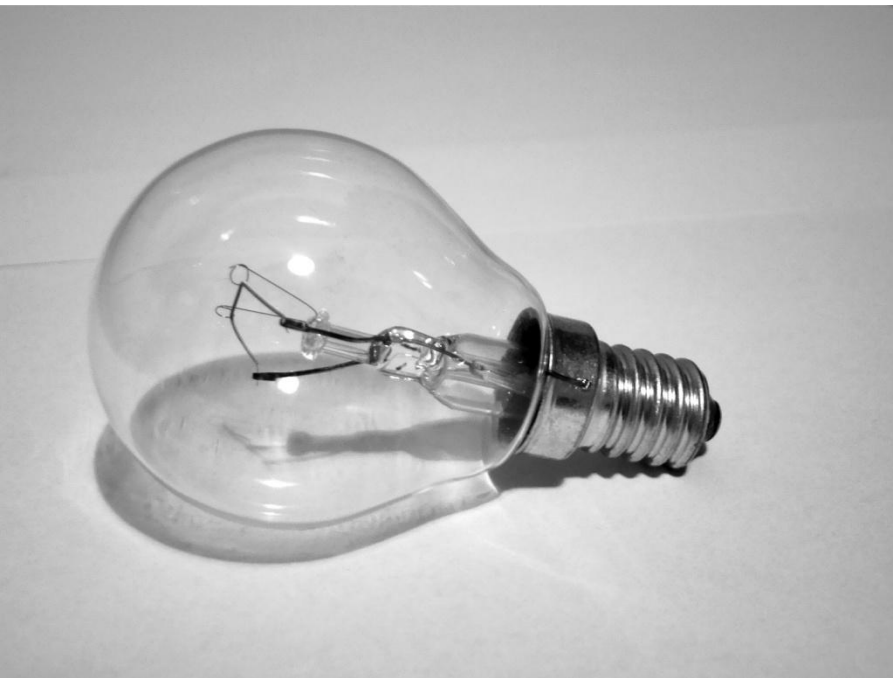
This should encourage energy use in periods of lower demand.



How does it address this problem of peak demand? – Load control

Allows technological solutions at periods of high demand.

For example, appliances across different properties can be harmonised to reduce electricity demand without reducing customer amenity.



How does it address this problem of peak demand? – Information to consumers

By coupling Smart Meters with new interactive services, consumers will be able to access accurate, real-time details about their power consumption.

A government initiative should provide subsidies to households to acquire in home devices that can provide information about power consumption in real time.



How much does it all cost?



\$106 extra per customer
this year

\$122 extra per customer
next year

\$2 billion across the
state

Are smart meters harmful to my health?

Electromagnetic radiation from smart meters has been found to be well below the safe levels determined by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).



Do smart meters cause fires?

A report by energy safety regulator Energy Safe Victoria from May concluded that Smart Meters are safe, do not pose any greater safety risk than the meters they are replacing, and that there is no evidence to suggest that Smart Meters are exploding or causing fires.



Should I be concerned?

Cost of the smart meter roll out is high at a time of rising energy prices and cost of living pressures.

However, CUAC is confident that, other than this cost, an effective consumer protection regime will be developed.

Consumers will not have to change to a flexible or time of use tariff if they do not want to.

Consumers will be able to access subsidised devices to put in their home to provide greater information about energy usage.

Over time, benefits from the roll out should be returned to consumers through energy system savings .

What can you do to save money on energy?

**Switch company!
Find a better
energy offer!**



Steps to getting a better energy offer

1. Find your most recent electricity bill and assess your level of consumption (kWh) and costs.
2. If you don't want to go to too much effort, simply call your electricity company and ask for a discount. You never know your luck!
3. However, going beyond this, there is plenty of useful information on the government price comparison website at www.yourchoice.vic.gov.au. If you can't use the internet then give them a call on 1300 134 575 and ask them for the offers that are available to you.
4. If you find an offer that suits you through your choice, call the energy provider and ask to be switched over.



What to look out for...

If you are in a fixed term contract (e.g. 12 or 24 months) you may incur an exit fee if you leave the contract prior to its conclusion



What else can you do to save money on energy?

Eliminate a second fridge (if you have one)

Turn lights and appliances off when not in use

Limit the space you are heating or cooling (close the doors to your unused rooms and seal draughts)



Use curtains as barriers against the cold/heat

Keep the space clear around the back, side and top of your fridge to allow good airflow.

Where to go for more information? – Smart meters

The Department of Primary Industries,
www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smart-meters or
136 186

Your electricity distributor:

United Energy,
www.unitedenergy.com.au or 1300 131
689

SP AusNet, www.sp-ausnet.com.au or
1300 360 795



Where to go for more information? – Saving money on energy



New Government Switch On website:

www.switchon.vic.gov.au

The Your Choice website at

www.yourchoice.vic.gov.au or 1300 134 575

Where to go for more information? – Complaints

First contact the energy company you have a problem with.

If you are not satisfied, you can contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman at 1800 500 509



Questions?

