



## **DAVID MORRIS MP**

**Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government  
Member for Mornington**

### **Electricity – The Trouble with Smart Meters Legislative Assembly 2 September 2009**

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) — The matter I raise this evening is for the Minister for Energy and Resources, and the action I seek is that the rollout of the new electricity interval meters — often referred to as smart meters — does not result in any Victorian consumers losing access to an off-peak tariff.

Members will be aware that the rollout of meters is now under way, and I understand it is intended to be completed by 2013. The crux of the problem seems to be that while some of the new meters will have two separate elements and therefore the capacity to track two different tariffs — measure peak and off-peak usage, for instance — it would appear that not all will be in that position.

I am told SP AusNet, Powercor and possibly Citipower will be installing the two-element meters in situations where existing customers have an off-peak requirement, while Jemena and United Energy, on the other hand, are not planning to make that facility available. There are, of course, additional issues where a customer has solar panels on the roof and may want to feed excess power back into the grid, and that is even more complicated if there is off-peak power.

In making this request to the minister I want to make it clear that I am not under the misapprehension that the minister is in fact the regulator. I recognise that the minister is not the regulator; I am simply asking him to have a look at the possible consequences of the rollout of these meters.

In doing so I am drawing on the experience of a constituent who in 2006 had a meter installed that supposedly registered both peak and off-peak usage. His supplier at the time billed him for peak and off-peak. A year later he changed suppliers and was then told, 'No, this meter cannot in fact deliver peak and off-peak'.

Without canvassing the merits of that claim — because this is probably not the appropriate forum to deal with that particular consumer issue — as part of the process the constituent has dealt with the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) who has written to him this year and suggested that:

*another method of seeking systemic change to the issues you have raised — —*

that is, the peak and off-peak, would be to contact his local member of Parliament and the minister.

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