



17 August 2011

## Media Statement

### **CUSTOMERS SMART METER WISHES BEING RESPECTED - DISTRIBUTORS**

The five Victorian electricity distribution businesses, CitiPower, Jemena, Powercor Australia, SP AusNet and United Energy have assured all Victorians that they will continue to make every endeavour to respect customers' wishes to defer the installation of a smart meter at their property while the State Government completes its review of the advanced metering infrastructure or "smart meter program".

The Distributors are legally obliged to roll out advanced metering infrastructure to all customers across Victoria. The Government has advised that the roll out should continue during its review.

However, all five Distributors have again confirmed today that they continue to implement the Government's request and customers who do not currently want a meter installed at their property during the Government's review will have their smart meter installation deferred.

In agreeing to this request, the Distributors were, and remain, mindful of the need to balance responsiveness to customer wishes with the need to keep costs to a minimum. Unless a critical mass of installations can be maintained in the roll out, costs will increase and benefits will be delayed.

Any customer who has been notified that they are about to have a smart meter installed and who wants to defer installation until after the outcome of the Government's review should contact their Distributor to be put on a deferral list.

The best time for customers to contact their Distributor is when they receive written notification that the smart meter is going to be installed. Prompt notification at that point will give the local Distributor the time to ensure the customer's request can be implemented.

Distribution businesses also reject claims they are targeting apartment or tenanted buildings to speed up the rollout and that insufficient notice is being given of a scheduled installation.

The roll out process requires that all customers be notified by two letters sent within 40 days of a scheduled installation. This applies to all customers, whether they are property owners or tenants and regardless of the type of dwelling.

Around 750,000 smart meters have now been installed as part of this significant infrastructure upgrade. These meters, when teamed with an in home display or web

portal, and a flexible tariff structure, will help all Victorians better manage their electricity use and costs in the future.

The Distributors have worked to support the Government in its deliberations on these important policy matters for more than eight months, and look forward to the Government clarifying its future plans for the roll out at the earliest possible time.

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Media contacts:-

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