

MARTIN THORSBY PTY LTD
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING
A.B.N. 84 106 012 462

23/6/18

IPART Review of Electricity Retailers Metering Practices in NSW

My company has been an ASP – 4 grades (1197) & authorised to work on the Essential Energy Network (AP30216) since 1998.

We have done overhead services, underground services, disconnect & reconnect, along with metering installations for the entire time.

Prior to December 1 – 2017

- 1) New connection – advise client to apply for an NMI & assist with details
- 2) Existing connection – doing upgrades or alteration – client provides NMI
- 3) I submit an “Application for Connection” online to Essential Energy
- 4) For standard load or minor increase in load – approved in 24 hours
- 5) For heavier load applications – maximum 21 days
- 6) We could do the works the next day if required
- 7) I would provide meters for the works from stock held at our Depot
- 8) I submit online forms for CCEW & NOSWA to Essential Energy
- 9) Jobs could be completed within a couple of days if deemed urgent.
- 10) All the electrical contracting, Level 2 works & metering done at ONE time.
- 11) It did not matter which retailer the customer was with – I noted the retailer on my AFC

Cost to Customer included in my Billing

- 1) Supply & install of meters – Single Phase (\$40.71 – 3 Phase (\$153.79)
- 2) Time Clock if Off Peak required – unit free to me – I pay freight (\$10.00)
- 3) Submit AFC & receive connection offer number from Essential Energy (\$26.65)
- 4) Submit NOSWA to Essential Energy after works completed (\$49.61)

After December 1 – 2017

- 1) New & existing installations as above – get the NMI number
- 2) I submit Application for Connection online to Essential Energy – wait 24 hours
- 3) Submit Application for a New Connection to Origin – 30 working days minimum time
- 4) Wait for Approval from Origin – cannot proceed to next stage until work order given
- 5) Submit Application for an Energy Meter – 15 working days minimum
- 6) Continue to contact Origin regards timing of the meter install – hours on the phone
- 7) We need the “meter install” date so we can coordinate our install works to suit

Commercial & Industrial Electrical Contractors – Plant Breakdown & Programmed Maintenance
PLC Control Systems for Timber, Mining & Material Transfer Operations – Engineering Design
Computer Data Logging for System Monitoring

Level 2 Service Provider for Essential Energy – Grade A

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- 8) Chase Origin to see if meter has been installed – they don't automatically do this
 - 9) We travel back to the site to carry out our final testing as per AS 3000 requirements.
 - 10) I submit online forms for CCEW & NOSWA to Essential Energy for my Level 2 works.

Cost to Customer included in my billing

- 1) Supply & install of time clock if Off Peak required (\$10.00)
- 2) Submit AFC & receive connection offer number (\$26.65)
- 3) Submit NOSWA after works completed to Essential Energy (\$49.61)
- 4) Second trip to site for testing - \$120 to \$200 depending on travel time.

Operations since December 1 – 2017

Very little information was fed out to us Level 2 ASP's regards the retailers taking over metering, other than notes from Essential Energy telling us that we won't be doing metering for them after 1/12/17. We were to return our stock meters to their store houses & we would receive a credit for their costs. As a NECA member, we were advised of changes coming, but even NECA didn't know exactly how the new system was going to work. We were advised to try & contact some retailers to find out what their procedures would be.

I contacted all the Level 2 ASP's in my area, & some from away, only to find they had not much idea of what was going to happen either.

NO RETAILERS had contacted or advised existing Level 2 ASP's that install meters, of the changes that were to occur. They signed up & trained companies & organisations to conduct their meter installations, totally separate from existing ASP's. We became instantly redundant.

I found out that I could become an "Accredited Meter Installer" via Acumen Metering. I spent \$3500 in training & testing equipment, only to find out that Origin had decided to give most of its metering jobs to Vector Metering. I would have to train with them with all the additional costs. Also, all of the other retailers have their own Accredited Meter Installers, & don't accept training from other retailers. I would have to do separate training with all of the big players to be able to install their meters – this has become cost prohibitive to my company. Perhaps TAFE or other Registered Training Organisations could have devised a "standard" training course that we could attend – become an "Accredited Meter Installer" that covered all retailers. I have been installing meters for 20 years, with not one fault or problem.

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Why are meter installations important to my business & clients?

- 1) New Installation: We would provide power to the site as Level 2 ASP's – overhead or underground & leave power ready in the new meter box. The retailer sends out a "Meter Installer" afterwards to install the meter. We have to return to site to conduct all the final testing of the new installation & then provide a Certificate of Compliance. The second site visit by us for testing, is added to the clients bill, costing them more money than before.
- 2) Existing Installation Upgrade. We would erect a new meter box, alter the service line connection if required & have power to the new box, ready for the meter installer to arrive. If the meter installer fails to arrive for any reason, we have a CLIENT WITHOUT POWER. This has occurred to us, & we had to erect the old meters to keep power ON.

After many discussions with fellow ASP's, & meter installers we have met on job sites, it would appear that the Energy Retailers were not adequately prepared for their transition into metering supply & install.

Phone "wait times" have improved lately, with 20 to 30 minutes waiting common. At first, there was no where enough staff to answer phones – 2 hours, 12 minutes was my longest wait time – I needed an answer desperately for a job.

Origin were not prepared for "Upgrades or Alterations" to existing installations – they were focused on "New Connections". They cant seem to grasp how important it is for electrical contractors, Level 2 ASP'S, & metering people to all be onsite the same day, for a supply changeover to a new system. Prior to December 1 last year, we were all 3 at one time, & no customer faced the possibility of having **no power**.

Origin have made NO ALLOWANCE for sites that have "no phone service" – they do not have meters available. An application submitted in January this year, still has no meter allocated. We have done the job for the client, & reused the old meter. We live in a rural area, with many remote properties that have no phone service – Origin still have no answer for this problem. Clients wishing to have a "Smart Meter" installed, are precluded from having this service.

The additional time spent by us coordinating jobs with retailers, waiting on phones for answers, travelling back to sites, has additional costs involved – all of which are "on charged" to the customer – Power of Choice so far, has taken connections times from 2 days before, now to around 2 months, along with adding significant costs to the customers final bill.

Would be pleased to discuss any of the above matters with IPART if requested

Regards

Martin Thorsby