

Author name: D. Woods

Date of submission: Friday, 9 October 2015

Submission: Water Meter Reading
IPART SUBMISSION

METER READING CHARGES

The outrageous charge for reading a six, seven or eight digit cyclometer dial type water meter once a year needs a serious rethink.

A radical examination is called for when one considers that electricity suppliers read millions of meters in some cases monthly in most cases quarterly and don't levy any specific charge for cost of reading and billing. In the case of Essential Energy many of these meters are located in rural areas, indeed some are immediately adjacent to where a water meter is situated.

Cost efficiencies could be achieved by having the electricity meter readers also read the water meters as part of their routine circuit. These meter readers are trained in reading a diverse range of types of meters including the contra rotating dials on many of the older type induction disc meters to the cyclometer types and now the digital type faces of electronic meters.

This would eliminate two separate trips by different people.

Reduced need for number of vehicles

Reduced travelling times

Reduction in accommodation facilities and rented premises

Reduction in organisational staff including Payroll staff and Supervisory staff

There isn't really a need for two separate organisations of monopoly essential services.

Both organisations are State owned and controlled.

One hierarchical structure could serve both functions as could the one set of accommodation facilities.

Billing could, at least in the short term, continue to be carried out from the two databases without the need for major change.

Although there may need to be some change to the programs for the hand held data loggers used by the meter readers.

With the restructuring of the electricity industry there are many localities with excess facilities that could be better utilised if water staff were accommodated at these facilities and thus represent a cost saving for Government and citizens alike.

This is particularly true now with the reduction in staffing levels brought on by the decision of IPART to restrict the costing of the 'poles and wires' part of electricity distribution.

Now would be an opportune time for IPART to do likewise with water.