

Important information  
about smart meters and  
what they mean for you...



Welcome to  
smart metering

The Victorian Government's smart meter project is seeing 2.6 million new electricity meters installed across the state. United Energy, your electricity distributor, is rolling out over 600,000 smart meters through the Mornington Peninsula and Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs.

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## Dear Customer

United Energy is your electricity distribution company. We own, operate and maintain the electricity network in your area, including the poles, wires and meters. It's our role to ensure you receive safe and reliable electricity supply. A map of our electricity distribution area is on page 9.

We are responsible for installing a new electricity meter at your property as part of the Victorian Government's Advanced Metering Infrastructure program, also known as the "smart meter" program.

We have produced this guide so you can read about:

- Why this project is important
- What you can expect when the new meter is installed at your property
- How the new meters (and the advanced technology network we are building at the same time) can help you stay safe, use power more efficiently and save energy and money into the future.

In this guide you can also read about ways you can track your daily, weekly and seasonal electricity use, and get fast notification of electricity outages in your area, by registering for our free internet portal *Energy Easy*.

This guide is also our invitation to you to discuss the smart meter rollout. Please use the contact details on the back cover to get in touch with us or find out more information.



**Hugh Gleeson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
United Energy

## The future...

You might have heard that the electricity meter at your property needs replacing because it is old infrastructure that needs to be upgraded. But this is only part of the story.

Technology is rapidly changing the way we generate and use electricity.

Over the next 10 to 20 years, we will get more diverse, localised sources of energy production, including renewable energy. Already, many Victorians generate solar power at their own homes.

Around the world, there are already intelligent appliances that look for ways to save power and money, electric cars that plug in at home, and “smart cities” are becoming a reality.

As energy distributors, in a regulated system, we need to build and maintain electricity assets so Victorians can enjoy all these exciting opportunities, while we also manage costs and deliver your electricity efficiently and safely.

That’s what the smart meter rollout is all about. Energy systems in our state must meet your changing needs, protect our planet and keep Victoria competitive.

The new electricity meter we are installing at your property is a vital step on our journey towards a more efficient, sustainable future.

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## What are smart meters?

The smart meter at your property is just one part of the new advanced infrastructure we're building to improve the way information about the electricity you use is collected and used by you, the retailer who bills you for electricity and us as your local distributor.

It's like the start of digital TV. A whole new system has been created, and with one new piece of equipment you become part of it and gain access to a bigger world.

Each smart meter links your property to your electricity distributor by a sophisticated communication network. This means more accurate data about electricity use can be quickly communicated from every meter on the network.

This advanced two-way communication system helps us see and respond much faster to power faults and requests for connection or disconnection.

It means we can get meter readings without having to bother you with any visits, or use estimates, so your billing will be more accurate.

The system also allows you to add an in-home display or access an internet portal, like *Energy Easy*, so you can see just how much electricity you're using, all the time, and know what it costs.

And it gives electricity retailers the opportunity to offer you more flexible pricing – and helps you make better informed choices about what pricing plan suits you – based on the amount of electricity you use and when you use it.



## Nothing is more important than your safety

Electricity is so much a part of our lives that we sometimes forget how dangerous it can be.

As we are installing a smart meter at your property, we are also taking care of your basic electrical safety, with a free safety check of the meter box as part of every meter installation.

At every installation, a qualified and accredited installer checks and tests meter boards, enclosures and connector boxes and looks for signs of damage or unsafe wiring. We've identified dangerous wiring or other defects that needed repair in thousands of homes and, if required, helped our customers arrange repairs.

And the safety of smart meters themselves, as well as of their installation, has been thoroughly tested and researched.

To find out more please visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters)

## How the meter works

The smart meter installed at your property is designed to give better information to you and to us.

The meter measures and records how much electricity is being used at your property and sends that data to us each day through a communications network. That means we don't have to send anyone out to read the meter and we don't have to estimate how much electricity has been used.

It also means you can see how much electricity you are using at any time, via our internet portal *Energy Easy* or an in-home display. With that information, you can make more educated choices about which retail offer suits you as well as how and when electricity is used on your property.

You can look at the meter yourself for some basic information. The next page shows how to understand and use the features of the meter.



# Smart meter features

## LCD display:

You can choose to show the current date, current time, total amount of electricity used since the meter was installed and (if relevant) the amount of electricity generated and exported from your property.

## Power usage light:

This light flashes when electricity is being used at your property.

## Scroll button:

This button navigates between information shown on the LCD display.

## Terminal cover:

The cover is sealed to prevent tampering and protect the security of your usage information.

On the cover the installer places a sticker with reading instructions for the specific meter type.

This sticker also gives you our faults number.



## Making *Energy Easy*

The information you can see on the smart meter is limited. But you can easily see clear information about what electricity has been used on a daily, weekly or seasonal basis using an in-home display or internet portal.

If you have accurate information about how much electricity you use, you can better manage your costs and choose a retail plan which suits your lifestyle.

To help you, we have set up a free internet portal called *Energy Easy*. You can access this new, secure system any time on your computer, tablet or smart phone to track your daily, weekly and seasonal electricity use.

All United Energy (UE) customers with a smart meter installed can register to use *Energy Easy*. Then you can use it to view your electricity usage data, set targets and track your progress. You can keep track of your usage in kilowatt hours (kWh), dollars and carbon emissions.

*Energy Easy* also allows you to access our sophisticated outage management system. You can see up-to-date information and maps showing where power is out currently, how many customers are affected and when we estimate power will be back on. If you wish, you can sign up to get this information via email or SMS.

Finally, *Energy Easy* also includes internet links to a range of resources about how you can save energy and costs in your home or business.

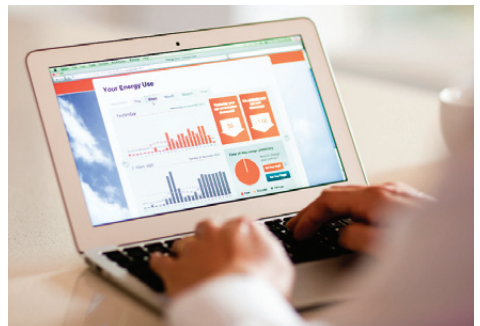
To register for *Energy Easy*, just go to our website [www.ue.com.au](http://www.ue.com.au) and follow the prompts. For more information, email [energye@ue.com.au](mailto:energye@ue.com.au)

### Accessing your electricity data in real time

You also have the option of linking the smart meter to an in-home display (also called an IHD). An IHD is a small, portable device that is constantly updated with data from the meter so it can show you in real time how much electricity is being used and the effect of any changes you make.

You can also use *Energy Easy* as a “self service” tool to bind your smart meter to an IHD, so your data is linked and you can check it any time, in a way that suits you.

While UE does not supply IHDs, the Victorian Government announced in 2012 that it aims to subsidise the purchase of IHDs through its Energy Saver Incentive Scheme. More information about this initiative is available at [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters)







If you are a UE customer with a smart meter installed, you can register for *Energy Easy* by going to our website [www.ue.com.au](http://www.ue.com.au) and following the prompts. Then you can use it to view your electricity usage data, set targets and track your progress.

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## Questions and answers

### What is the difference between my electricity distributor and electricity retailer?

Distributors, like UE, own and manage the poles, wires and meters that deliver electricity to your property. There are five electricity distributors licenced to deliver electricity to consumers in Victoria. Each is responsible for a geographical region and yours is UE. Electricity retailers buy electricity from generators and sell it to you. You can choose your electricity retailer, who will bill you and offer various pricing plans and services to meet your needs.

### Are smart meters safe?

Yes. The Victoria Government has confirmed that smart meters are safe and meet strict Australian safety standards. In July 2012 Energy Safe Victoria, the independent energy safety regulator, again confirmed the meters are safe and are being safely installed. For further information go to [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

### Are there any health concerns with the meter regarding electromagnetic and radio frequency?

All smart meter installations must meet stringent regulatory requirements set by the Australian Communications and Media Authority. This includes compliance with electromagnetic exposure limits. The meters have lower communication and radio emissions than many other everyday devices such as mobile and cordless phones, microwave ovens and baby monitors. For further information go to [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters) or call 136 186.

### Will my electricity bill increase as a result of the smart meter installation?

No. Metering service charges have always been part of your electricity bill and the costs of the smart meter program have been built into the meter charges since January 2010. The cost of metering has been approved in accordance with state government policy and by the Australian Energy Regulator. Queries on your electricity bill should be referred to your electricity retailer.

### Is my information secure and will it remain confidential?

Yes. It is managed under tight privacy controls which comply with the *Federal Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)*.

### What happens if someone at my property is on life support?

You should check with your electricity retailer that you have correctly completed and sent them the necessary forms, in which case they will have informed us of your life support status. If you are unsure, please contact your electricity retailer as soon as possible.

# Our electricity network area



# Useful contacts

## **United Energy**

**Customer Service Desk** Monday to Friday 8am–6pm

**1300 131 689**

**Emergency/Faults** 24 hours

**132 099**

**[www.ue.com.au](http://www.ue.com.au)**

## **Service Stream (installers)**

**(03) 9937 6777**

**[www.servicestream.com.au](http://www.servicestream.com.au)**

## **Department of Primary Industries**

**136 186**

**[www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/smartmeters)**

## **Energy Safe Victoria**

**1800 652 563**

**[www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)**