Submission Type: Rule Change

Reference: Accelerating smart meter deployment

Organisation: N/A

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Comments: ----------
I WOULD LIKE MY NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS TO BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL, IF THIS IS POSSIBLE.

I do not support an accelerated rollout of smart meters in Australia, with a goal of 'universal uptake' by 2030.

Instead, I believe that the choice of whether to have a smart meter should remain with the householder, and that - as is or was the case in New Zealand
- consumers should have the right to switch an existing smart meter for a earlier type of non-smart digital meter, in exchange for a modest payment.

I do not support power companies pushing their customers to switch to a smart meter on the basis of dodgy and factually inaccurate mass messaging about meter failure, and believe that they should always offer opt-outs.

Smart meters contain electronic components that have a significant embodied energy, and become a technology-intensive e-waste disposal headache when they eventually fail. I do not believe that there is currently an eco-friendly repair initiative in place to refurbish and test failed smart meters in order that they can be safely reused.

Given that smart meters have finite lifespan, installing a smart meter in place of an older-style long-lived analogue meter involves instituting a never-ending replacement cycle that previously did not exist.

Smart meters, when they are not wireless-deactivated via the power retailer at the householder's request - an option that few people are aware of, by design - emit microwave radiation that is classed as a 'possible carcinogen'
by the WHO. Weatherboard walls, unlike brick, offer no radiation shielding effect for people occupying the room on the other side of the wall from the meter. Numerous people, including radiation-harm sceptics, report having experienced health issues that began immediately following installation.

In Australia and many other countries, the potential for harm from microwave radiation has been whitewashed, and ARPANSA was established in the 1990s with the goal of instituting industry-friendly safety standards, in the face of objections from the CSIRO, which advocated a safety limit 25 times stricter than the 1000 microwatts per square centimetre limit that was adopted by Australia.

The benefits are smart meters include a more detailed surveillance of power consumption, which can also be achieved with a borrowed power meter, or by remaining aware of more power-intensive appliances.

These meters may also facilitate certain types of renewable energy power trading, and I advocate the use of technology that does not emit any level of wireless radiation to achieve this purpose.

It is also easier to shut down certain types of power usage during periods of high demand, with or without the customer's consent, in order to manage supply.

In addition to my points above, smart meters are tied to a range of risks involving surveillance, surveillance capitalism, hacking, domestic-violence-oriented stalking behaviour, technical glitches (see https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz9zqn77ezno), elevated bills (that could be caused by inaccurate readings of electronic power loads, see https://techxplore.com/news/2017-03-electronic-energy-meters-false-higher.html),
a history of house fires caused by faulty design elements, ease of disconnecting late energy payers at the press of a button, and the future possibility of dystopian speech control where maintaining a functioning electricity supply could be tied in with adhering to accepted narratives online and refraining from expressing certain dissenting points of view.

In essence, I believe that the dangers and risks of smart meters outweigh the positives, and do not support an accelerated rollout.