

Smart energy meters hold pride of place in homes of environmentally aware consumers

Environmentally aware homeowners will increasingly give smart electricity meters pride of place in their dwellings, according an energy industry leader.

George Maltabarow, Managing Director of EnergyAustralia, said there was growing consumer awareness of the connection between domestic energy use and carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

Speaking at a major energy conference at the Sydney Convention Centre, Mr Maltabarow said as information spread on the link between power use and global warming more consumers would choose to install intelligent metering systems.

“Smart meters are the gateway between an intelligent electricity network and the household,” he said.

“The smart meter with built-in communications will allow homeowners to know exactly how much energy they are using.

“This data will support more informed consumers who will seek to use energy more efficiently, and contribute to a better environment.”

Earlier this week, climate change authority and Australian of the Year, Professor Tim Flannery, told the Energy 21C conference in Sydney that until recently energy customers had been like cattle in a feedlot.

“The stuff comes down the wire to them – they have never thought where it has come from,” Professor Flannery said.

“Once they start learning the consequences of it (energy use) on climate change, they are going to take a greater interest and expect more.”

Mr Maltabarow said electronic smart meters would give discerning consumers the extra information and services they demand.

“These meters can revolutionise the way that households consume energy because people will be able to make more informed choices about how and when they use their power,” he added.

“Our surveys have revealed that 90 per cent of our customers want to be more energy efficient, but 70 per cent don’t know how.

“Smart meters will help give customers this information and companies that do not give energy consumers what they want will lose market share.”

EnergyAustralia has already rolled out about 300,000 smart meters to households and businesses. The company has installed the meters free of charge to customers.

Initial data has shown that 83 per cent of customers with smart meters were achieving energy and cost savings. The average saving for these customers is about \$45 a year.

“Once customers become more accustomed to the time pricing system, we expect them to make further changes to their energy use and save more on their bills,” Mr Maltabarow explained.

EnergyAustralia is also testing advanced smart meters with new communications capabilities, including remote meter reading, remote connection and disconnection and on-line access to electricity consumption.

Interview:

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