

Smart Meter Roll-Out RIS Released For Consultation

The Ministerial Council on Energy Standing Committee of Officials has released for public consultation its Regulatory Impact Statement for a smart meter roll-out. The analysis assesses the case for a roll-out of smart meters across jurisdictions and analyses potential roll-out scenarios. The RIS discusses the broader policy issues associated with a roll-out and complements the findings of the cost-benefit analysis. MCE says that smart meters have a range of potential benefits for all energy market participants, including consumers. The ability to introduce cost-reflective pricing will lead to greater economic efficiency in the electricity market and greater consumer information should encourage increased energy efficiency in households. As a result smart meters should also have a positive impact in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, says MCE. However, by far the largest benefits identified arise from network and retail business efficiencies, with demand response benefits modest in comparison. These business efficiency benefits drive the business case for smart meters and a roll-out will need to ensure these benefits are maximised. The benefits of smart meters are not the same in all jurisdictions or all regions within jurisdictions. Where there is significant risk of benefits not outweighing costs, pilots to help reduce uncertainty are recommended by the consultants undertaking the analysis. Those jurisdictions demonstrating a positive net benefit will need to allow time for businesses to take the necessary steps to begin a roll-out. For these reasons a staged timeline across jurisdictions will be considered. The RIS also outlines a variety of implementation issues to be considered as part of a smart meter roll-out. Ministers will consider submissions when they meet in June 2008.

[Source essa]