

Submission on the Electricity Information Exchange Protocol

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Background:

We are living on a lifestyle property. When we built on the property in 2014/15 we decided to go 100% electric. We have a small BBQ but that is our only gas appliance and it is hardly ever used. Because this area has many trees and is beset by owners who do not actively manage those trees, we have a history of experiencing power cuts. Being close to an urban area, our lines company naturally prioritizes the fixing of power cuts to those areas with the most affected customers. After big storms our area can be without power for extended periods. This was obvious when we were building on the site, so our house was wired to operate from a generator which we can isolate from the grid. Late 2025 we installed a 15kWh solar panel array and a 27kWh battery system. Prior to installing the solar panel array our average electricity consumption was approx. 62kWh per day which includes powering two EV's.

I have a physics degree and I have always been interested in energy efficiency. We understand and document our energy usage. I possess data on our energy usage going back 12 years. We have lived in some very inefficient houses so I have been constantly aware of what our energy use is costing us, and the planet! Over the years we have actively moved between retailers in order to minimize energy expenditures. But every time we change, we have been conscious that each retailer wishes to portray their supply and pricing in a different format. Unless you are prepared to make a solid effort, it is very difficult to make a like for like comparison between different retailers. Over time, I have become convinced that the electricity retailers deliberately complicate their offerings in order to avoid you making a comparison. The devices used by the retailers include sign-on bonuses, free hours of power, reduced rates for a few hours on some nights, et cetera. Unless you possess data forming a time of use consumption matrix and marry that to a time of use tariff chart, you will be frustratingly ineffective in predicting your power bill, and thus unable to pick between competing retailers. I would suggest that far fewer than 5 percent of consumers will either have the time or skills available to make the necessary calculations. Some people rely on tools like the Powerswitch or Billy models to help them. The only time I looked at the Billy model, it seemed to follow the Powerswitch usage estimation model. Neither of them come close to modelling our usage. Thus, I am not sure those models are much use helping consumers optimize their power purchasing. They are no use for our situation. Thus, it becomes even more important for a consumer to be able to understand their usage and the various retailers pricing plans.

Many power retailers see their prime role as to attract new customers by offering relatively short-term sign-on bonuses. The nett effect of these bonuses is to make the comparison between competing offerings more difficult. When added to the tariff matrix complications from time of use and day of the week, the retailers are almost unrestrained from complicating their price offering. But yet there's more. Timing.

Our current retailer gobbled our previous retailer last year. We were placed onto a new billing cycle. Now Meridian have decided they are going to move us onto a new billing cycle start date. They argue some undisclosed system/software change has caused this need to change. I complained (using their webform and regrettably did not keep a copy of that webform). Meridian clearly think they have the ability to move from one billing period date (which they had selected) to another billing date (that they alone, without consultation, had selected). They have ignored my complaint. I was about to complain to the electricity authority and came across this opportunity to submit on **Electricity Information Exchange Protocol**. Every time a retailer chooses to change a billing cycle, you lose the ability to make valid comparisons of usage between periods and across different suppliers. The retailers are deliberately making it difficult for consumers to compare pricing between suppliers.

I have looked at the proposed methodology for the supply of data to customers from the retailers. I may have missed it, but there does not seem to be any mechanism to force the retailer to supply data produced to allow comparison in one homogenous format. Think of supermarket pricing for dishwasher tablets. The marketers produce various package sizes and sell them at different prices. The only way to work out what package you should buy, is to find out the unit cost per tablet. We need a similar calculation for equivalent electricity unit cost.

The electricity authority should dictate that the power retailers be forced to display an Equivalent unit cost. You should be smart enough to work out a methodology for this but may I suggest it could be in the form of an interactive tool. The power companies have our usage data, and the tariff for our times of use, so they should be forced to provide an estimate of what their power offering would cost the consumer under the pricing scenario they are offering. Then the consumer will have real choice and we can put an end to the power retailers obfuscating/trying to mislead their customers.

Knowledge is Power. The opportunity for change to the **Electricity Information Exchange Protocol can be used to offer consumers a realistic projection of the cost of electricity for their connection, and to choose between competing retailers. Please consider my submission favourably.**

Regards

Andrew Robertson (by email)