

# POWER OF CHOICE.

Industry Discussion Paper

March 2017

**ActewAGL**

*for you*

# Introduction

The technology and services that are provided by Australia's energy network are changing rapidly in both scope and complexity. Buildings, vehicles and electricity supply and generation are getting smarter and cleaner. Consumers of electricity are seeking more information, more choices and more control over their energy bills. ActewAGL Distribution recognises the importance of delivering the safe, reliable and sustainable energy solutions our customers expect.

Power of Choice is an opportunity for energy companies, including distribution network businesses such as ActewAGL Distribution, to better respond to technology and other market changes.

The most significant change will be to the ownership of electricity meters, which may be installed or replaced by someone other than ActewAGL Distribution from 1 December 2017. Meters installed or replaced after this date may not belong to, and will therefore not be maintained by, ActewAGL Distribution. To respond to this change in ownership and meet the requirements of the Power of Choice changes ActewAGL Distribution will need to make a number of changes including:

- **revised Service and Installation Rules**
- **changes to meter placement, meter protection and access to meters**
- **updates to industry training and accreditation**
- **creating new ways for customers to access information on energy usage.**

The Power of Choice changes come into effect from 1 December 2017, so ActewAGL Distribution will be making changes throughout the year in preparation for this date.

This paper seeks to provide information on what changes are required and provide an opportunity for feedback from local businesses such as electricians, builders, property developers, commercial property owners and the energy industry.

# What changes will occur under Power of Choice?

Power of Choice represents a significant change to the operation of electricity networks across Australia. Many of these changes relate to the rules and regulations that apply to network businesses. The key changes can be grouped into three areas.

**NETWORK PRICES:** new rules on how electricity network prices are developed and structured to provide more efficient and flexible pricing options to customers and to encourage network providers to continue to be efficient when building, operating and maintaining energy networks.

**CUSTOMER INFORMATION:** new rules will make it easier for customers to access their electricity consumption data from either their retailer or the network business.

**ELECTRICITY METERING:** shifting responsibility for ownership, maintenance and reading of electricity meters away from network businesses. From 1 December 2017 electricity metering will be opened up to competition so that electricity retailers have the choice of who provides, installs and reads meters on behalf of their customers. This will see the creation of new metering businesses. From this time all new meter installations, including replacement of meters will be smart meters. These metering changes, in particular, require a number of changes by ActewAGL Distribution.

## WHAT IS THE POWER OF CHOICE?

The Power of Choice Review was undertaken by the Australian Energy Market Commission. Its recommendations for changes to the National Electricity Market have been endorsed by most state and federal governments and will be implemented during 2017.

Power of Choice encourages Australian energy users to make more informed choices about how and when they use electricity. Power of Choice changes will provide customers with better information and more options so that they can better manage their energy bills.

For further information on Power of Choice:

[www.actewagl.com.au/powerofchoice](http://www.actewagl.com.au/powerofchoice)

[www.aemc.gov.au/Major-Pages/Power-of-choice](http://www.aemc.gov.au/Major-Pages/Power-of-choice)

# What will change at ActewAGL Distribution?

## Revised Service and Installation Rules

The Electricity Service and Installation Rules (S&I Rules) have been reviewed to incorporate the changes to metering rules required under the Power of Choice reforms. We have also taken this opportunity to provide greater technical breadth, update the S&I Rules to reflect new technology and, where possible, to align with the NSW rules. The updated S&I Rules will be easier to understand and to locate the required information.

The following changes are proposed to the S&I Rules.

- A restructuring of the content and use of new chapter headings that will be easier to understand and follow a format similar to the NSW S&I Rules.
- Expansion of information on underground services covering supply to single domestic and small installations through to installations with demands exceeding 100 Amps per phase. New information includes more explanatory drawings and tables within the text to provide clearer information to industry.
- A new chapter titled 'Provision for Service Equipment and Metering' reflects all new Power of Choice metering requirements, identifies ActewAGL Distribution's network boundary with associated diagrams; new meter ownership; and the requirement for a meter protection device for every meter installed. This chapter also provides explanation and information on the changed role of the distributor (ActewAGL Distribution) and the role of the Meter Provider.

- New chapters have been created to provide specific information and some additional requirements with respect to high voltage customer installations, and embedded generators (to a maximum of 10kW per phase). Technical content has been expanded and is supported by explanatory drawings and tables.

The S&I Rules will need to be regularly reviewed to respond to the experiences of industry and ActewAGL Distribution. The draft S&I Rules have been provided to industry for comment.

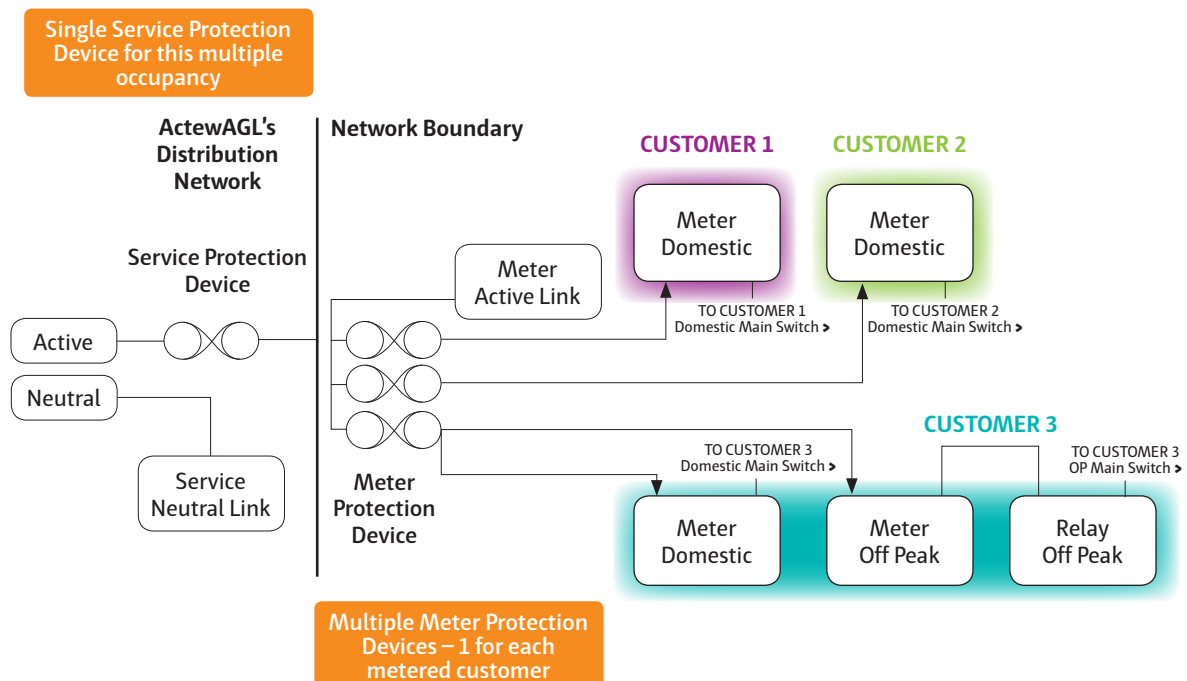
## Changes to meter installation and location

As a result of the Power of Choice reforms there will be new businesses installing, servicing and reading electricity meters. This change is occurring across many parts of Australia, not just in the ACT.

To ensure safety of the network it is important that ActewAGL Distribution clearly defines what is part of the electricity network, is owned by us, and is our responsibility. This needs to be done in a way that still allows other approved businesses to undertake work associated with the electricity meter and its connection to ActewAGL Distribution's network.

The ActewAGL Distribution network boundary under Power of Choice is illustrated in the diagram below. This boundary and the connection point will also be clearly explained in the new S&I Rules.

Diagram 1. Power of choice as it applies to a new multiple occupancy premises



The location of meters is currently specified in the S&I Rules and ActewAGL Distribution's preference is to maintain this. This would result in a standard being applied across the ACT regardless of who a customer chooses as a retailer. Not only will this result in notable safety benefits across the network and allow ActewAGL Distribution to discharge its obligations under the National Electricity Rules, it will also benefit consumers by facilitating smoother processes should they wish to switch to a new retailer.

## Updates to industry training and accreditation

The ability of new businesses to install, maintain and read electricity meters may provide opportunities for local electricians to undertake work on the meters. To ensure that these electricians have the appropriate skills, new training and accreditation requirements may exist in the ACT.

From December 2017 all meters installed will be smart meters. The ACT Government is currently reviewing existing training competencies and developing the associated changes to licensing and technical eligibility requirements. The ACT Government will be consulting with industry on the changes during 2017.

In addition to the appropriate ACT Government issued licence, ActewAGL Distribution will also require all electricians wishing to install or maintain meters to have appropriate network authorisation. This is to ensure that these electricians have the necessary information and skills to interact safely with our electricity network and to maintain accountability and consistency across the network. This training and associated accreditation will be incorporated into our existing ActewAGL Distribution Electrical Safety Rules 'blue-book' training and will commence later in 2017. We will still require electricians to complete an annual refresher course to maintain their authorisation.

## Creating new ways for customers to access information on energy usage

As part of the Power of Choice reforms ActewAGL Distribution is developing new ways to provide better information to our customers on how much energy they use. During 2017 we will be trialling new technology that will allow customers to be able to access better information on how much energy they use and when. As more smart meters are installed across the ACT the level of detail available to the customer will increase.

More information on our new customer portal will be available later this year.

## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Are there other areas of the S&I Rules that should be considered as part of this review? Are there areas that you currently find cumbersome or hard to understand?

Do you need more information from us to understand the potential impacts?



## New metering roles and responsibilities

Under the Power of Choice reforms there are a number of new metering businesses and roles created.

One of those new roles will be the metering coordinator, who may be independent of both our network business and the energy retailer. The metering coordinator will be responsible for appointing the meter installers (meter providers) and for appointing the meter data agent who will collect customer

energy usage data. This data will be provided to the national market, the network business and the retailer.

At the moment, the network business (ActewAGL Distribution) is responsible for installing the connection between a customer installation (a house, apartment or business) and the network. In addition to this, ActewAGL Distribution is responsible for installing a meter to monitor energy consumption for the majority of customers in the ACT. The Power of Choice reforms change this arrangement and will see the energy retailer become responsible for the installation of a meter through the metering coordinator and the metering provider.



### METERING COORDINATOR

Role and responsibilities of existing Responsible Person role to be performed by Metering Coordinator with new responsibility added. Has primary responsibility for the provision of metering services, including protecting security of, and access to small customer's advanced meters, the data they contain and the services they provide.

### METERING PROVIDER

Role involves installing, operating and maintaining metering installation. Additional requirements in relation to security controls and confidentiality.

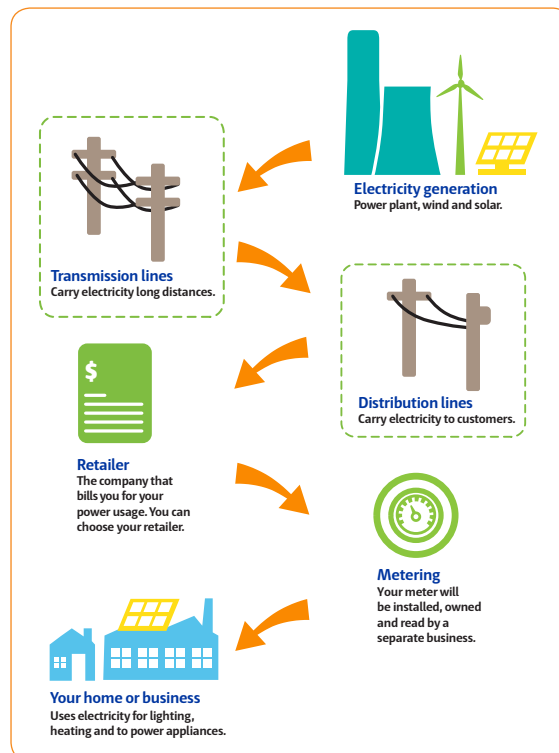


### DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

Can fund the deployment of advanced meters as part of a demand management program, but will need to work with retailers. Can negotiate with Metering Coordinator for advanced metering services and/or retain existing network devices.

### METERING DATA PROVIDER

Role involves collecting, processing and storing metering data. Additional requirements in relation to security controls and confidentiality.



# Frequently asked questions

## **Who will I contact if I want to install a meter and connect a new house?**

After 1 December 2017 all new meters will be smart meters. All new house meter installations will need to be coordinated through their electricity retailer.

## **If I have ActewAGL authorisation can I work on any electricity meter in the ACT?**

Existing accumulation or interval meters, also known as type 5 and 6 meters, across the ACT will remain the property of ActewAGL Distribution until such time as they fail and need to be replaced or the customer requests, and pays for, a new meter through their retailer. Only ActewAGL Distribution staff will be authorised to work on these meters.

## **What is the difference between a smart meter, an advanced meter and a type 4 meter?**

In the ACT these terms all refer to the same type of meter.

## **How will I know who owns the meter?**

If the electricity customer, i.e., the property owner or tenant, does not know who owns the meter, they will be able to ask their electricity retailer.

## **Will I need different training for different types of meters?**

The new metering coordinators and metering providers may establish requirements associated with the skills of their employees or sub-contractors. ACT Government endorsed training, accreditation and licencing will cover all meter types.

## **Who will I call if I want to disconnect the power?**

There will be no change to the processes required to disconnect power from a site after the new rules commence. In most instances a customer will have to contact their retailer, however, for some types of works ActewAGL Distribution will still be required to be contacted. Please contact your retailer for more information.

## **How will the changes impact properties with roof-top solar panels?**

For properties that are supplying their surplus power to the grid through an arrangement with their retailer there will be no change, if there is no change of meter.

Changes may occur for solar power generators that are providing power to the electricity network through an ActewAGL Distribution metered tariff. These customers will need to speak directly with ActewAGL Distribution for further information.

## **How will the changes impact multi-unit properties that have larger numbers of meters?**

New requirements may be put in place once the new S&I Rules commence. These rules and the associated requirements will be made available once the consultation and approval process has been completed.

## **How much will it cost to get licenced and authorised to work on the ActewAGL Network?**

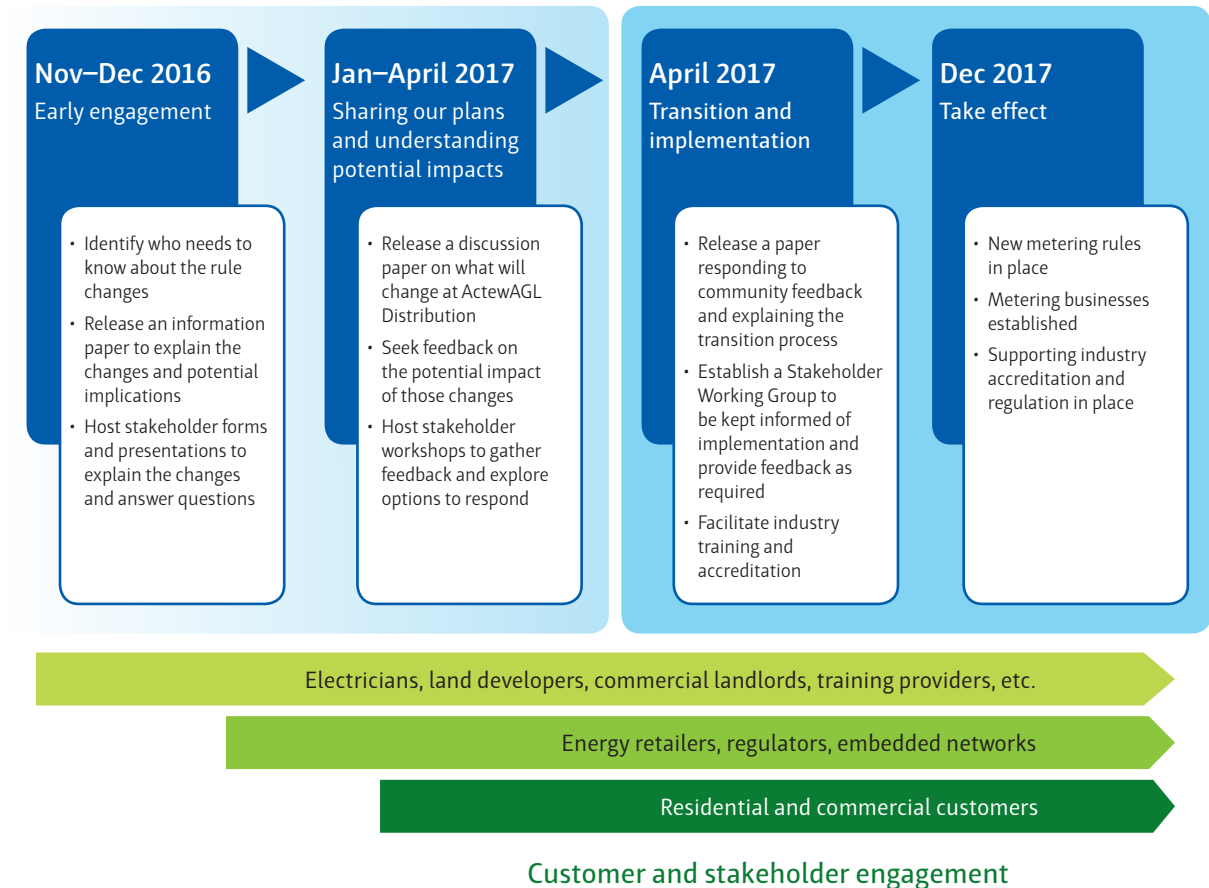
Licencing and accreditation costs are the responsibility of the ACT Government. To be authorised to work on the ActewAGL Network you will need to complete the 'Blue Book' training. Information, including costs, is available at <http://www.actewagl.com.au/Networks/Networks-for-industry/ActewAGL-training.aspx>.

## **Who do I call when something goes wrong with my power or the meter?**

After 1 December 2017 you will need to call your electricity retailer for all faults.

# Timeframes for change

Diagram 2. ActewAGL Distribution's Power of Choice implementation program



## HAVE YOUR SAY

Feedback on this paper can be provided by writing to or emailing us at the contact details below.

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## Staying in touch or learning more

We encourage you to keep in touch with what is happening as the Power of Choice is implemented.

Further information is available on our website  
[www.actewagl.com.au/powerofchoice](http://www.actewagl.com.au/powerofchoice)

If you would like to continue to be part of this discussion please provide your contact details to:

[powerofchoice@actewagl.com.au](mailto:powerofchoice@actewagl.com.au) and we will keep you informed as the process continues.