

Industry Forum Notes

Meeting	Power of Choice Industry Forum
Location	ActewAGL Distribution Southern Services Centre, Greenway
Date	Wednesday 29 March 2017 4:30pm – 6:00pm

About the forum

Members of the electrical and related industries were invited to attend an industry forum initiated by ActewAGL Distribution (AAD) with co-presenters from ACT Government Licensing and Accreditation. There were 21 attendees.

Attendees were provided with an AAD discussion paper of Power of Choice (PoC) changes that will affect industry from 1 December 2017. Copies of the AAD and ACT Government presentations and the discussion paper can be found at www.actewagl.com.au/powerofchoice.

Presentations

ActewAGL Distribution

Michael Monck, Program Manager of the Power of Choice project gave a presentation covering the following topics.

- Processes—connection and energisation of installations, faults and emergencies.
- Electrical Service and Installation Rules (S&I Rules)—neutral links, meter boards, isolation points and networks boundary clarity.
- Training—electrical safety rules.
- Licensing—ACT Government responsibility.

ACT Government

Vanessa Morris from the Licensing and Accreditation section of the ACT Government gave a presentation covering the following topics.

- Some attendees had Accredited Service Provider (ASP) accreditation in NSW. How will it be recognised in the ACT?
- Changes in the legislation will be able to be applied in mid-July 2017.
- Feedback on changes is welcome; initial industry thinking is wanted by the ACT Government. Email feedback to: constructionpolicy@act.gov.au.

General discussion

The following comments, questions and answers were raised in response to the presentations or as part of the general discussion.

- Will there be a transition period, for instance, if construction of a multi-unit dwelling has started before 1 December 2017 what will happen?
A: Power of Choice reforms will be in place by 1 December 2017, with the new S&I Rules available from mid-2017. There will be transition rules but the timing is not yet known.
- How will asbestos in meters be handled?
A: There are no changes to asbestos rules and all meter providers or installers will need to abide by the applicable rules in relation to the installation they are working on.
- If a person is a level two ASP in NSW, will that be accepted in the ACT?
A: This is still being determined by the ACT Government but it is expected that the ACT will recognise this NSW qualification.
- The December date is not very practical; what was considered in setting it?
A: The time-frame was set by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).
- It took NSW a long time to move into the area of smart meters. The time-frame for the ACT seems very short. Was the effect on the electrical industry taken into account?
A: AAD acknowledges that the time-frame is short and that there is a lot of work and training to be done. However, the time-frame was set by the AER. Meter installers can install meters after 1 December 2017 and it may be necessary for AAD to continue energising the supply before meters can be commissioned for a time.
- Smart readers can read faults; can they read these if the neutral link isn't there?
A: The ability to test the integrity of the neutral connection does not form part of the minimum specifications for metering. It will be at the discretion of the retailer and their associated metering service providers to install meters that add further benefits to consumers in terms of safety and the efficient operation of the network.
- If a builder chooses a particular retailer to install meters, is the subsequent buyer/tenant of the property bound to that retailer?
A: There is no obligation for the buyer/tenant to stay with the retailer.
- How will the integrity of the installation be managed?
A: AS3000 will still apply. AAD has no influence on the metering installer; the ACT Government will retain responsibility for assessing whether the installation meets the requirements of the wiring rules.
- Is it likely that there will be another set of rules, for example, to do with meter placement?
A: Metering providers will need to have asset management plans. It would be beneficial if these were standard across the ACT so that generic principles can apply. AAD does not have the power to dictate things such as meter placement in the S&I Rules. The ACT Government is exploring ways to work with AAD to agree on how to enforce things such as meter placement.
- Are service protection devices and meter protection devices the same?
A: In a multi-unit building they may not be but in a standard house they are often the same.

- A suggestion was made by an attendee that an overarching body similar to NECA but for meter providers could develop a code on issues such as meter placement.
- If a large development is due to have cabling done in late November what is the cut off period for AAD to install the meter?
A: The S&I Rules will be released by mid-2017 and will need to be communicated. If paperwork requesting meters to be installed is submitted before 1 December 2017, there would be grounds to consider AAD proceeding with the installation. AAD will give as much notice as possible regarding changes.
- When will the revised electrical safety rules (blue book) training be held and how long will the course be?
A: The new training is planned to start from August 2017. It will still be a one-day course and the cost is \$350. There is a link to information on the course in the discussion paper. As soon as the revised course is available, industry will be advised; if there is significant demand then more courses will be offered.
- If you have current electrical safety rules (blue book) training, will further training be required in relation to the revised S&I Rules?
A: There will be further training required if a contractor wishes to energise and de-energise installations. AAD will work with industry to ensure the transition from the old rules to the new rules has minimal impact on electricians.
- Is the electrical safety rules training (blue book) a refresher each year?
A: Yes.