

Submission in response to:

Regulatory Review – Smart Meters  
Issues Paper April 2010

From: Mr A.W. and Mrs P.A. Stark,

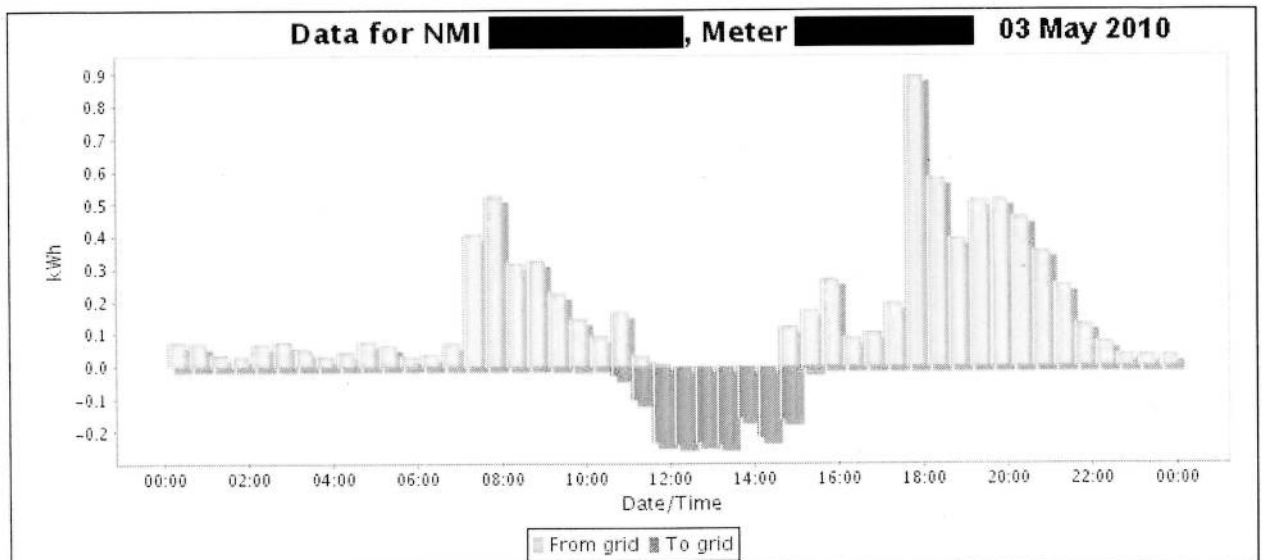
Although our submission relates to a number of paragraphs in the Issues Paper, we feel it should most appropriately be consigned to:

**4: Other Issues.**

The Issues Paper entirely ignores the existence of independent metering companies. For nearly a year our smart meter has supplied all the features your paper describes as being a minimum requirement, plus most that are listed as desirable in future. You have gone to Texas, Ontario and California for examples of how it could be done, yet our independent metering company already supplies the same (and better) here.

Metropolis Metering supplied our smart meter as part of Manningham City Council's group Solar PV scheme. We have no other interest in that company other than to be a customer highly satisfied with the fully transparent electricity smart metering we are now enjoying.

- retention of both the "peak" and "off-peak" metering and rates that previously applied
- billing from our retailer identical in form and detail to that previously applying
- remote reading of the meter by Metropolis
- half hourly data viewable on-line, from installation date up to yesterday
- various configurations of data are available
- the meter's digital display gives various data accumulations for current and past month.



*Example of online display, showing some of our data for yesterday.*

The problem, as we see it, is that the distributors have apparently been given a near-monopoly on supply of smart meters to residential consumers under the AMI rollout. We have had the experience of our distributor using bullying tactics, to try and unilaterally change our Metropolis smart meter for one of their own inferior products. Only by deferring to our State MP have we been able to resist such unwelcome advances. This is unacceptable.

- **The rights of pre-existing owners of smart meters (and the supplying and monitoring companies) need to be specifically set out in the Regulations.**

We personally have no professional understanding of the commercial and regulatory relationships between companies such as Metropolis and the distributors and retailers. We suspect that the former are operating in a legislative grey area. They are not welcome by any distributor trying to enforce its perceived monopoly on smart meters and very few retailers accept the customers of independent metering companies. Our experience is that essentially no employees of either the distributors or retailers have any understanding of how their own companies interact with the independent metering companies, or that such exist.

Consequently consumers such as us have no freedom of choice when it comes to retailer (in our case only Origin Energy) and are obliged to pay a "smart meter charge" even though our relatively new smart meter installation was privately and fully paid for.

- **The right to freedom of choice of retailer needs to be available to consumers without them needing to change or downgrade their smart meter arrangement.**

We feel these matters are highly relevant to your Issues Paper and deserve consideration and resolution.

This completes our submission.

Mr A.W. and Mrs P.A. Stark  
4th May 2010