

Sent: Saturday, 23 January 2010 12:30 PM
To: IPART Mailbox
Subject: RE: INCREASED TARIFFS FOR ELECTRICITY - COUNTRY ENERGY

Due to the proposed astronomic price increases in electricity over the coming 3-4 years, we are closely monitoring our electricity useage, and ways to both decrease our useage or use it in off peak times to minimise costs to the household.

We live in a house which is just over 3 years old, with an efficient heat-pump transfer hot water system, and a 5000 litre water tank. The meter which was installed in the house has the ability to take 3 readings of electricity useage, peak, shoulder and off peak. At no stage has Country Energy ever made this information available to us. It has been in our own digging and delving that we have found this out for ourselves. So in the interests of trying to minimise our bill, we approached Country Energy for information about off peak, and how we might go about changing to that system.

It is no problem to do it, but for the privilege of doing so, instead of being charged \$0.7331/day for service ability, we would then have to pay \$0.9468/day - both plus GST. WHY?????? As far as we can see, there are 2 issues here:-

1. Country Energy describe their Service Availability Charge as a "contribution to the cost of making electricity available whenever we need it." Why then are we being asked to pay more than our share, if we decide to move to an off peak schedule?
2. The numbers seem to be stacked against the consumer, with little incentive to give consideration to the notion of "Off-Peak". Why even offer it? It seems to be simply revenue raising - one way or another they intend to obtain a fixed minimum amount of money from us, and they will get it.

Country Energy cite these price increases as simply enabling them to complete maintenance on existing networks. What about looking to the future, and green electricity? It has been our observation since moving to NSW, that Country Energy is quite prominent in throwing large amounts of cash around for community events etc, particularly in rural communities, to promote their presence. Whilst community responsibility is great, shouldn't that money be better spent, in compulsory research and development, to provide the consumer with better service. After all, that's what they're actually there for.

This seems to be the general malaise in all of the service industries that the good old consumer can pay for everything. If you are to approve these exorbitant price increases over the coming years, then all electricity providers have a huge and inherent responsibility to provide consumers with Green Electricity in the fastest and most efficient form available. For your part in this, how will Country Energy and other providers be measured in achieving this, and what measures are in place to monitor those measures, with subsequent penalties for non achievement? The buck must stop somewhere.

Regards,
Steve and Chris Young