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Smart meter pilot rollout across northern Melbourne

SP AusNet installs and trials 850 meters prior to full rollout

Victorian electricity distribution business SP AusNet is working with the Victorian Government's Department of Primary Industries to pilot new electricity smart metering technology in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

Smart meters have the ability to record electricity consumption every half hour. They can also be remotely read and help residents manage their electricity consumption.

SP AusNet Group General Manager Norm Drew said the purpose of the pilot was to choose the best technology for the future rollout of new smart meters to all SP AusNet electricity distribution customers in the coming years.

"As part of the pilot, approximately 850 smart electricity meters have been installed in some households across Mill Park, South Morang, Epping, Thomastown, Greensborough, Bundoora, Lalor and Plenty," Mr Drew said.

"These suburbs provide the best range of meter locations for the pilot," he said.

Before SP AusNet's full smart meter rollout occurs for all 600,000 electricity distribution customers in northern and eastern Victoria, SP AusNet will be testing the technology that will enable more precise recording of electricity usage than previously possible with old style meters.

Participating in the smart meter trial will not cost anything for households selected, and the existing electricity meter will continue to be read as usual by SP AusNet's meter readers.

Minister for Energy and Resources Peter Batchelor said SP AusNet's pilot was part of the Victorian Government's smart metering program to install smart meters across the entire state.

"The Victorian Government and electricity industry are working to develop smarter electricity infrastructure, which will help customers better manage their energy use and broaden the community's ability to respond to climate change," Mr Batchelor said.

The Victorian Government's smart meter program is scheduled to run until 2013. By this time, all Victorian residential and small business electricity customers will have a smart meter installed at their property.

For more information on the Victorian Government's smart metering program, visit the Department of Primary Industries website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/energy and select *Smart Meters* or alternatively phone 136 186.