

A smarter way to cut bills

By **RACHEL KLEINMAN**

WITH two young children and a newborn baby, the washing machine never stops turning at the Ivanhoe home of Daniel and Nadia Marsic.

But the family gets a chance to cut its power bill from today, when one of Victoria's first residential electricity "smart meters" is installed. "We are keen on anything that can help reduce our use of resources as long as it is reasonably cost effective," Mr Marsic said.

Their meter, supplied by Melbourne-based provider Metropolis, will go live before the Victorian Government's January 2008 roll-out of smart meters.

The Government plans for all Victorian homes to have smart meters by 2012, replacing meters up to 100 years old in some cases, and has allocated \$2 million towards trials.

The meters read electricity use every half an hour and feed the data into a central system. They are designed to give consumers more information about their power use. The aim is that this will, in turn, encourage them to cut consumption and ease the load on electricity supplies during peak periods.

A spokesman for Energy Minister Peter Batchelor said the meters would help secure power supplies, and allow people to reduce bills and greenhouse gas emissions.

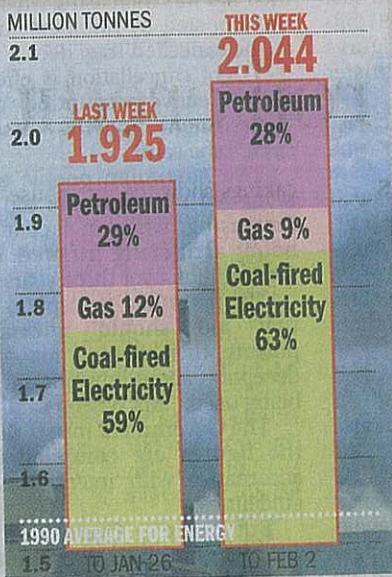
But the meter revolution is not without question marks. A recent report said a national roll-out may take more than five years and was inconclusive about the costs versus benefits.



Daniel Marsic with the smart meter to be installed.

PICTURE: MICHAEL CLAYTON-JONES

THE WEEKLY GREENHOUSE GAS INDICATOR



DID YOU KNOW?

- Victorians' emissions from energy increased by 119,000 tonnes this week to 2.044 million tonnes, the highest for the year
- Emissions from coal-fired electricity rose 6% this week with more electricity exported to other States
- This week's indicator is 33% above the 1990 weekly average for energy

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