

FORUM DEBATE

TOPIC: 'This forum believes that heat and water consumption need not be metered'

THE VOTE: Before the debate, the majority (4 to 3) disagreed with the belief of the forum. The debate failed to change opinions in favour of not metering. Final vote 5 to 2 in favour of 'heat and water consumption must be metered'

NO METERS (Andy Ford and Kate Crawford)

Meters cost money that could be more effectively spent on measures to save heat or water. Using the cheapest installation prices and the highest flagrancency possible with water consumption there is a 2 year minimum payback.

With heat this becomes a particular issue since the payback is more like 10 to 15 years- Solar heating could be fitted for the price of a meter!

Infrastructure companies throw away heat- why should it then be metered!

Metering gives no incentive for supply companies to encourage consumers to save on heat and water.

The final argument was that water and heat are essential commodities and should be there for all. Government grants can help the old and needy who can't afford metered supplies but is this the right way to do it?

METERS (Ashley B, Dave Frank and Allan Homewood)

It is not fair that a single person living on their own should pay the same as a family of six just because they live in the same size dwelling.

Metered bills increase awareness of consumption. Individual customers develop an incentive to be heat and water efficient thus minimising environmental impact.

A new heat meter is available which, fully installed and operational, is a third the price of what was suggested by the 'for' team.

INTERESTING POINTS OF DISCUSSION FROM THE AUDIENCE:

- Shouldn't we be metering the infrastructure companies to control their heat and water wastage and to force them into more 'joined up thinking'?
- It may be effective to 'cap' over-consumption. Heavy penalisation over a fixed quantity. - The use of water and heat limiting appliances may work as effectively as meters in doing this.
- We shouldn't confuse meters and monitoring. Monitoring of heat and water-use is often necessary for feedback and may be a regulatory requirement but does not incur the costs of individual metering.
- Costs of installed meters need confirmation. There was too much disparity from the 'for' and 'against' team.

THE CRUSHING ARGUMENT

- Came from Anna who admitted to a regular three showers a day when on un-metered supplies in Sweden!- Oh and Bob, the Australian car washing, lawn drencher.

ANY MORE VIEWS /IDEAS?

The debating forum remains open