

# Theft of Supply

## A Consumer Perspective

Peter Dorans

energywatch

# Who is the Victim?

- Suppliers?
- Network Operators?
- Consumers?

- Responsibility for detection and investigation must be on suppliers
- Strong regulatory regimes governing behaviour
- Regular prosecutions
- Publicity and education
- Bi-annual meter inspections regardless of supplier

# Theft Act 1968

- S13 – A person who dishonestly uses, without due authority, .....any electricity shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years

- 148 Complaints and Enquiries received in 12 months to May 2004
- Consumers either deny tampering or
- Questioning assessment of charges

- There must be greater emphasis on the criminality of theft and all evidence must be gathered in line with the Human Rights and Police and Criminal Evidence Acts
- Evidence gathered must be able to categorically prove responsibility for tampering.

# Assessment of Charges

- Assessment of charges is arbitrary
- No clear formula for assessment
- No determination process

# Conclusions

- Theft is a criminal offence and should be treated as such
- Including burden of proof on the accuser
- Assessment of charges should be for maximum of three months
- Needs to be determination regime to confirm tampering and assessed charges



- The rights of all consumers and the need to prevent theft
- MUST be balanced with
- The rights of the accused