



Press Release
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Meters A Three Year E-Scrap Project For Southland Disability Enterprise Workers

What weighs nearly two and a half tonnes and uses a lot of different screwdrivers? Old electricity meters, that's what.

PowerNet and Southland disABILITY Enterprises Ltd (SDE) are working together to recycle 74,000 old electricity meters being replaced as part of PowerNet's new advanced meters project.

PowerNet project manager Paul McCullagh said the company was amazed at what SDE could do with the old meters.

"SDE is able to recycle 99 per cent of the meter. The test run of recycling saw them convert nearly 1,500 meters into two and a half tonnes of recyclables," he said.

"It's really important to PowerNet and our sustainability goals that the old meters being replaced as part of our renewal programme could be disposed of properly – and SDE has amazed us with their ability to recycle the whole meter."

Everything from circuit boards to wiring is recycled. In the test run, only 23kg of material went to landfill.

SDE general manager Ian Beker said the meter recycling project was just another, albeit larger, version of other E Scrap recycling his workers had done.

"While the meters are new items to work with the skills that they use on them are ones that they have already gained from dismantling other E Scrap items," Mr Beker said.

"The volume of meters will ensure they keep their fine motor skills highly tuned and should enable them to become more adept at recognising the various tools they need to dismantle, as there is a huge variety in the meters coming in and each need their own unique screw driver bits."

The meter recycling project will continue over the next three years as the old meters are replaced with advanced meters across the Electricity Invercargill Limited and The Power Company networks in Southland and West Otago.

The new meters will mean better and more efficient management of the electricity networks PowerNet manages. It will mean field staff can quickly and easily identify an outage and return power to consumers. It also allows the company to better manage electricity demand at times of high use and makes the networks more efficient, Mr McCullagh said.

ENDS

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Southland DisAbility Enterprises staff Greg Duncan and Michelle Gilkison dismantling old electricity meters.