WATCH YOUR ELECTRICITY

netVendor's Mary-Ann le Roux holds one of the newly launched real-time automatic reader light meters, which, once installed, allows homeowners to keep an eye on their water and electricity use.

PICTURE: COLLEEN DARDAGAN

DURBAN-BASED company netVendor last week launched the first real-time residential automatic reading meter in the hopes this would encourage consumers to stop using electricity during peak hours

The meter also allows for load shedding of up to eight loads a household – geyser, air con, pool pump and so on.

The company, netVendor, has also launched a water meter with prepaid or post-paid facilities that uses the same communication infrastructure as the electricity system.

The company has spent two years developing this technology, which its founder, Dennis

Ellerman, said would integrate into their existing vending systems that have been used nationally and internationally for the past 10 years.

"The integration includes buying from retail outlets, Point Of Sale devices, internet and cellphone vending. It remotely loads the STS token directly into electricity and water meters if configured in the prepaid mode.

"Basically, it means anyone can manage their electricity and water usage online, or from their cellphone, by remotely controlling their electrical loads or water meter valve."

Ellerman said the intelligent automatic metering solution

extended the existing smart metering model that is currently being used in the commercial and industrial sectors by allowing an affordable solution to the residential sector of the market. The solution allows for complex tariffs, load-shedding control and has a tamper alarm that remits to control centre.

"The minute that alarm goes off we dispatch personnel to investigate," he said.

Ellerman said the electricity meter could also be disconnected remotely and the water meter could have the valve remotely reduced to a trickle feed – in the case of unpaid bills – by controlling the valve.