

WESTERN POWER — SOLAR INSTALLATIONS — REGIONS

812. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the minister's answer to question without notice 757.

- (1) Is the power charge that Western Power collects from customers different in metropolitan and regional areas?
- (2) Can the minister clarify how Western Australians in metropolitan areas with 63-amp connections pay more for their electricity supply than regional Western Australians with 32-amp connections?
- (3) Can the minister confirm that a supply upgrade in a regional area can potentially cost the customer over \$20 000?
- (4) Does the minister believe that the total cost of providing electricity to regional and rural areas should be passed on to the people living in those locations?

The PRESIDENT: Just to note, that last part of the question seeks an opinion. I will give the call to the parliamentary secretary before I have the opportunity to consider that question.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Energy. I have an answer to question 4, notwithstanding it sought an opinion.

- (1) No. Under the government's uniform tariff policy, Western Power is required to provide postage stamp pricing for regulated tariff customers, including households, small business users and charities. This means that the price does not differ between regional and metropolitan customers; however, all customers are required to pay for their connections, which means costs vary, depending on the details of the connection, including its capacity.
- (2) Any customer wishing to connect to the Western Power network must pay for that connection up-front. This may be done by an individual property owner or a developer. When paid up-front by a developer it will form part of the bundled cost of purchasing that property.
- (3) Connection costs are assessed on an individual basis for both regional and metropolitan customers and depend on customer requirements and the work required.
- (4) No. The government is firmly committed to its uniform tariff policy, under which regional and rural customers receive a heavy cross-subsidy from metropolitan customers. This is why the Western Australian government continues to reject the Liberal Party plan to—I do not want to read that part of the answer, sorry.