

WESTERN POWER — REGIONAL CONSUMERS

**805. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to Western Power's supply allocation of 32 amps for single-phase rural residential properties in WA versus 63 amps for those in cities and towns in WA.

- (1) Prior to and up to February 2022, what direct consultation did Western Power undertake with residents and consumers of electricity from the grid regarding the application of compulsory circuit breakers on rural properties for any switchboard upgrade or new installation of household solar panels?
- (2) How much electricity do regional consumers of energy use compared with their metropolitan counterparts?
- (3) Prior to February 2022, how many regional electricity consumers had circuit breakers limited to 32 amps?
- (4) Prior to February 2022, how many, and what percentage of, regional electricity consumers were exceeding their supply allocation of 32 amps and how were these users notified?

**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.

Customers who have opted to maintain the default 32-amp connection are now required to install a circuit breaker for protection at their main circuit board. Customers who wish to upgrade their connection can do so, which has always been the case.

- (1) Western Power worked proactively with electrical contractor industry bodies, including the National Electrical Contractors Association, running a series of industry workshops and publishing articles in industry publications to communicate the new requirements. The new basic embedded generation technical requirements were also communicated to solar installers and electrical contractors from December 2021 to February 2022, including the publication of factsheets and frequently asked questions that are available on the Western Power and Synergy websites.
- (2) The information needed to answer this part of the question was not made available in time and I ask the member to put it on notice.
- (3) Western Power does not collect information on the exact construction of a customer's main switchboard and expects electrical contractors and their customers to follow Australian standards and the requirements in the *WA electrical requirements* and the *Western Australian service and installation requirements*. This includes the management of maximum demand either by calculation, measurement or limitation by use of a circuit breaker. If they have requested a standard connection service of 32 amps, and if the maximum demand may exceed their requested allocation, electrical contractors are required by standards to install a circuit breaker.
- (4) Western Power does not collect information on the exact construction of a customer's main switchboard and expects electrical contractors and their customers to follow Australian standards and the requirements in the *WA electrical requirements* and the *Western Australian service and installation requirements*. This includes the management of maximum demand either by calculation, measurement or limitation by use of a circuit breaker. If they have requested a standard connection service of 32 amps, and if the maximum demand may exceed their requested allocation, electrical contractors are required by standards to install a circuit breaker.