

SYNERGY — METER READERS

643. Hon Martin Aldridge to the minister representing the Minister for Energy:

- (1) I refer to Synergy increasingly issuing bills to customers with an estimated meter reading citing a shortage of meter readers, and I ask is there a shortage of meter readers in Western Australia?
- (2) If yes to (1), how many positions by FTE are currently vacant or understaffed?
- (3) Since 1 January 2022, how many Synergy customers have received an estimated bill arising from a lack of meter readers?
- (4) When is it expected that the shortage of meter readers will be resolved?

Hon Matthew Swinbourn replied:

- (1) From January 2022, meter reading resources have reduced significantly due to COVID-19 directions, a tight employment market in Western Australia, and extreme temperatures – with Perth experiencing the hottest summer on record.
- (2) Western Power are approximately 13 FTE understaffed with respect to meter readers, with a target meter reader workforce of 64 FTE.
- (3) Western Power has estimated 132,139 meters since 1 January 2022, approximately 10% of Western Power's network.
- (4) Western Power expects to return to regular staffing levels before the end of the financial year. Western Power has implemented several strategies to manage the resourcing issue going forward, including:
changes to the meter reading contractors working arrangements to minimise the impact of extreme heat related absence;
improving recruitment strategies with the meter reading contractor to improve recruitment potential and increase retention;
deploying AMI meters to reduce the number of manually read meters, with a focus on reducing the most inefficient meter reading areas to improve customer experience
Western Power is also working with Synergy to mitigate customer impacts where possible.